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JOC GROMELSKI/Stars and Stripes

Iwo Jima veteran Herbert Newman sings the national anthem Friday at a program marking the 60th anniversary of the Battle of Iwo Jima.



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY SIEGFRIED BRUNER/Stars and Stripes

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News Tracker ... What's new with old news

States

Vt. town secession vote: Only a year after generating a flurry of publicity for voting to secede and join New Hampshire, residents of Killington, Vt., are being asked to decide on Town Meeting day whether to rethink the idea.

"It's been a year, so it seemed like a good time to update people about where we stand and to bring the issue up again in a substantive way," Town Manager David Lewis said. "It seemed appropriate to tie it in with a vote at Town Meeting to give the voters the ability to say, 'We don't want to go any further.'"

Although Lewis and the board want to be responsive to voters, they don't have much fear that their efforts to date will be overturned.

Blake murder trial: The defense in Robert Blake's murder trial tried to undermine the testimony of two key prosecution witnesses — both former drug users — by calling on an expert who said chronic drug use can cause hallucinations and paranoid delusions.

Regular use of cocaine and methamphetamine also can cause irreversible brain damage, said Ronald Keith Siegel, a psychopharmacologist on the faculty of the University of California, Los Angeles, medical school.

Deputy District Attorney Shellie Samuels suggested the attacks on the testimony of Ronald "Duffy" Hamblen and Gary McLarty were not credible.

Judge's libel case: A judge who said he was misquoted in a series of articles as telling lawyers that a 14-year-old rape victim should "get over it" after a \$2.1 million libel case against the Boston Herald.

Jurors deliberated for more than 20 hours over five days before finding Friday that the newspaper and reporter David Wedge II, reported Judge Ernest B. Murphy. Another reporter, Jules Crittenden, was cleared.

The quote was included in a February 2002 series of Herald articles that said Murphy had been criticized by prosecutors for lenient sentences, including eight years' probation for a 17-year-old convicted of two rapes and an armed robbery.

Serail rape suspect: A man believed to be the convicted rapist who slipped away from officers in November after confessing to another assault was captured Friday after attacking a woman and stealing her car, police said.

The man was taken into custody in Glenwood Springs, about 150 miles west of Denver, according to Denver Police Chief Gerry Whitman. He was being held on \$25 million bail early Saturday.

Authorities were working to confirm his identity, but Whitman said they were "pretty confident" they had the right man.

Brent J. Brents, 35, is suspected in the sexual assaults on five women and girls earlier this month in Denver — nearly three months after he was questioned by police in Aurora about claims that he inappropriately touched a former girlfriend's 8-year-old son.

University admissions law: The University of Houston has decided to automatically admit applicants in the top 20 percent of their graduating class, sidestepping the controversial 10 percent admissions law.

University officials said the revised policy will be implemented in the fall 2006 semester regardless of what happens with on-going legislative attempts to change the law.

Michael Jackson trial: Los Angeles prosecutors in the child molestation trial of Michael Jackson want court permission to subpoena the star's financial records and present testimony about his wealth, according to documents released Friday.



Mideast unrest: In May, Israeli soldiers search the desert sands for body parts of troops killed by Palestinian militants in the Philadelphi corridor, an Israeli-controlled patrol road between Rafah and the Egyptian border. Israeli Vice Premier Shimon Peres said Friday that Israel has agreed in principle to evacuate the road on the Gaza-Egypt border that was one of the deadliest spots during the four-year Palestinian uprising.

Defense lawyers argued the materials are not relevant and violate Jackson's privacy.

In their motion, prosecutors said they plan to show Jackson's actions toward his accuser and the boy's family were motivated by a desire to minimize the effects of a documentary titled "Living With Michael Jackson" and to "preserve both his fortune and his reputation."

This was the first time prosecutors have alleged a financial motive by the entertainer.

Public pool ruling: A Muslim woman who was barred from accompanying her children to a public swimming pool because she was fully clothed settled a lawsuit Friday against the city of Omaha.

The city said it amended its swimming pool dress code to accommodate religious or medical needs. Other details of the settlement with Lubna Hussein were not made public.

"My little girls have been waiting for a chance to try out the water slides, and they'll finally get the opportunity this summer," Hussein said. "We're happy to feel like part of the community again."

Human smuggling: The New York man accused of driving and abandoning a hot, airless tractor-trailer in the nation's deadliest human smuggling attempt will not be allowed to waive his right to a jury trial, a judge decided Friday.

If Tyrone Williams' request had been approved, U.S. District Judge Vanessa Gilmore would have decided if he was guilty or innocent of any of 58 counts of harboring and transporting illegal immigrants he faces for the May 2003 smuggling attempt. Nineteen immigrants died.

Williams faces the death penalty in the case, scheduled to go to trial next week. Federal law allows the death penalty in fatal smuggling cases.

Military

Accused drill instructor: A drill instructor who struck a Marine recruit who later died during training has been suspended pending an investigation into the death, military officials said Friday.

Jason Tharp of Sutton, W.Va., drowned Feb. 8 while participating in a water-survival training course at Parris Island.

The day before his death, a Columbia television station recorded a confrontation between Tharp and the drill instructor, who was seen in the video grabbing Tharp by the shirt and striking him in the chest.

Proposed N.C. landing field: A federal judge Friday blocked the Navy from working on a proposed landing field in eastern North Carolina until it completes environmental impact studies for the site.

U.S. District Court Judge Terrence Boyle agreed with environmentalists and local officials that work should be halted while the Navy takes another look at how the field would affect a nearby wildlife refuge that is the winter home to tens of thousands of swans, geese and other birds.

The Navy wants to build the landing field on 30,000 acres to give new F/A-18 Super Hornet jets a place to practice aircraft carrier takeoffs and landings.

Gitmo translator sentenced: An American translator who admitted taking classified documents from the U.S. prison camp at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, was sentenced Friday to 20 months in prison.

With time already served, Ahmed Fathy Mehalla could be released in three weeks.

Mehalla, 32, an Egyptian-born U.S. citizen and civilian Arabic translator at Guantanamo, told the judge he exercised "very poor judgment" when he took computer discs out of the country. But he said he never intended to use the files for any illicit purpose.

World

East Timor abuses: Secretary-General Kofi Annan has appointed a commission of experts to review the prosecution of human rights violations during a wave of violence after East Timor voted for independence from Indonesia in 1999.

The U.N. Security Council expressed concern in November at Indonesia's failure to punish those responsible for the violence that killed 1,500 people and left much of East Timor in ruins.

Philippine rebels: Fresh fighting erupted Saturday on a southern Philippine island where troops captured a Muslim rebel camp just days earlier, leaving at least three soldiers dead and one wounded, a military commander and media reports said.

The soldiers encountered gunmen suspected to belong to the al-Qaida-linked Abu Sayyaf outside Indonesian town on Jolo island during a road security patrol. Jolo military commander Brig. Gen. Augustin Demala said.

Demala said three soldiers were killed and one was wounded in the clash. He gave no other details.

Stories and photo from The Associated Press

At least 50 dead in Iraq bombings

GI among those killed in suicide attacks on Shiites' holiest day

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Insurgents and suicide bombers struck out in Baghdad and other parts of Iraq on Saturday, leaving at least 50 people dead as Shiites commemorated the death 14 centuries ago of the founder of their Muslim sect.

For the second year, the attacks shattered the commemoration of Ashura, the holiest day of the Shiite religious calendar. The dead this year included a U.S. soldier, killed in Baghdad when American troops responded to calls for assistance from Iraqi forces unable to cope with a slew of attacks.

The country's interim government and Shiite political parties said they would not allow the country to slip into civil war just days before the religious group's political parties take control of Iraq.

The attacks made Saturday the deadliest day since last month's elections for a new national assembly. The Shiite ticket, the United Iraqi Alliance, won 48 percent of the vote in Iraq's first democratic balloting.

A series of similar attacks, some carried out by suicide bombers targeting Shiite mosques, killed 36 people on Friday.

"The bombings on Shiite mosques and shrines on Ashura by terrorists that call themselves Muslims are in fact actions by terrorists only attempting to spill even more Muslim blood by encouraging sectarian violence," Mouwaffaq al-Rubaie, the national security adviser for the interim government, told The Associated Press.

He said the suicide bombings were attempts "to create a religious war within Iraq. Iraqis will not allow this to happen, Iraqis will stand united as Iraqis foremost, and Iraq will not fall into sectarian war."

Insurgents carried out a steady stream of at-



A U.S. soldier covers the perimeter while others examine the body of one of two Iraqi police officers killed on a busy intersection Saturday in Mosul. Iraq. Each had been shot in the head and left on the side of the road. Across Iraq, a string of suicide bombings killed at least 50.

tacks using suicide bombers, mortars and gunmen across the country, said Capt. Sabah Yassin, a defense ministry official.

Among the deadliest attacks came when a suicide bomber blew up his car at an Iraqi army checkpoint in Latifiya, 20 miles south of the capital, killing nine Iraqi soldiers, he said.

At least eight suicide bombers staged attacks in and around Baghdad alone on Saturday, targeting religious gatherings and Iraqi checkpoints. An Associated Press count of the dead from those attacks alone totaled 24, but many more explosions were audible in the capital throughout the day.

It was unclear which of the attacks in Baghdad claimed the life of the American soldier, whose identity was withheld by the military pending notification of his next of kin.

Saturday's bombings came despite stepped-up security around the country. Au-

thorities had hoped to prevent a repeat of last year's attacks during Ashura in which insurgents killed at least 181 people in twin blasts in Karbala and Baghdad.

Security was so tight in Karbala that no attacks were carried out in that city, 50 miles south of Baghdad.

The attacks also came as a five-member U.S. Congressional delegation that includes Senator Hillary Clinton, a Democrat from New York, met with Iraqi government officials in Baghdad's Green Zone.

"The fact that you have these suicide bombings now, wreaking such hatred and violence while people pray, is to me, an indication of their failure," Clinton told reporters.

Authorities did make some progress against the insurgency, arresting two of its leaders, including a top aide to Iraqi al-Qaida leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi.

U.S. deaths in Iraq

The Associated Press

As of Friday, at least 1,475 members of the U.S. military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count. At least 1,116 died as a result of hostile action, according to the Defense Department.

The figures include four military civilians.

The AP count is 13 higher than the Defense Department's tally, last updated at 10 a.m. EST Friday.

The British military has reported 86 deaths; Italy, 20; Ukraine, 18; Poland, 16; Spain, 11; Bulgaria, seven; Slovakia, three; Estonia, Thailand and the Netherlands, two each; and Denmark, El Salvador, Hungary, Latvia and Kazakhstan one death each.

The latest deaths reported by the military:

■ A soldier was killed Friday when a bomb detonated near him north of Diwaniyah, Iraq.
■ A soldier was killed Friday when an explosive detonated by his vehicle near Balad, Iraq.

■ A soldier was killed Thursday by an explosive while on patrol in Tal Afar, Iraq.

■ A U.S. soldier was killed Thursday by small-arms fire in Mosul.

The latest identifications reported by the military:

■ Army Sgt. Frank B. Hernandez, 21, Phoenix; died Thursday in Tal Afar, Iraq, when an explosive detonated near his vehicle; assigned to 2nd Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, Stryker Brigade Combat Team, Fort Lewis, Wash.

■ Army Sgt. Christopher M. Pusateri, 21, Corning, N.Y.; died Wednesday in Mosul, Iraq, from small arms fire; assigned to 2nd Battalion, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, Fort Bragg, N.C.

■ Army Staff Sgt. Justin B. Carter, 21, Mansfield, Mo.; died Wednesday in Forward Operating Base Al-Kenizeh, Iraq, from non-combat injuries; assigned to the 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division (Mechanized), Fort Benning, Ga.

■ Army Staff Sgt. Katrina L. Bell-Johnson, 32, Orangeburg, S.C.; died Wednesday in Baquba, Iraq, from a vehicle accident; assigned to the 418th Transportation Company, 180th Transportation Battalion, Fort Hood, Texas.

■ Army Staff Sgt. Jason R. Hendrix, 28, Claremore, Okla.; died Wednesday in Ramadi, Iraq, while conducting combat operations; assigned to the 1st Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division, Camp Hovey, South Korea.

■ Army Pfc. Michael A. Arching, 20, Elmford, Va.; died Tuesday in Ramadi, Iraq, from small arms fire; assigned to the 1st Battalion, 503d Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division, Camp Casey, South Korea.

Chalabi confident he'll be prime minister

Former exile says he'd open Green Zone to Iraqi people

BY MAGGIE MICHAEL

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Ahmad Chalabi, the Washington insider who later fell out of favor with the United States, expressed confidence Friday that he was on the brink of being anointed by the United Iraqi Alliance to be the country's first democratically elected prime minister.

In an interview with The Associated Press, Chalabi said that if he's chosen prime minister, he would seek to establish an agreement to govern the presence of U.S. troops, and open the heavily fortified Green Zone, now housing government buildings and the U.S. and British embassies, to the Iraqi people.

He also promised to weed out corruption, establish a strong judiciary that would put Saddam Hussein and his former officials on trial "quickly," and give Iraqis the government jobs now held by foreigners recruited by the Coalition Provisional Authority that ran Iraq before the interim government was established.

"I will focus on getting sov-

eignty, which is the way to establish security," he said.

Chalabi has emerged as one of the two leading candidates to be the "clergy-backed" alliance's choice when a decision is made, possibly in a secret ballot early next week. The other is interim

Chalabi said that if elected, he'd put Saddam Hussein on trial "quickly."

Vice President Ibrahim al-Jaafari.

The alliance candidate is sure to win the backing of the 275-member parliament chosen in Jan. 30 elections, which gave the alliance about 51 percent of the seats. A two-thirds majority is required for approval of the prime minister, but the Kurdish parties apparently have agreed to support the alliance's candidate for prime minister in return for

the largely ceremonial presidency.

When asked if a majority of alliance members would vote for him, Chalabi — a secular Shiite — replied with a single word: yes.

Despite his confidence, much depends on which of the two 58-year-old men receives the blessing of Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, spiritual leader of Iraq's Shiite Muslims.

Chalabi tried to skirt the issue, insisting al-Sistani does not involve himself in such details.

"He encouraged people to have elections and it is now up to the various parliament groups to make choices of people who will emerge in the government. He isn't involved in the details," Chalabi said.

Chalabi said Iraqis need him to form a new government.

"Iraq needs a government that will be effective, help the assembly to draft the constitution, and get Iraq back on its feet," he said. Sitting in his home in Baghdad's wealthy Mansour neighborhood, Chalabi blamed his falling out with the United States to political infighting within the Bush administration.



Iraqi National Congress leader Ahmad Chalabi believes he'll be chosen to be prime minister ahead of Ibrahim al-Jaafari, a soft-spoken physician and interim vice president.

'The CCB is for an infantry-like job'

Army chief of personnel clarifies criteria for new Close Combat Badge

BY LEO SHANE III

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Army's new combat badge is designed honor non-infantry soldiers performing infantry roles, not simply those who find themselves in combat situations, the service's chief of personnel said Friday.

"While everyone in Iraq and Afghanistan is in harm's way, there is a difference between combat operations such as patrols fighting off attacks and deliberately planned offensive combat missions," said Lt. Gen. Franklin L. "Buster" Hagenbeck.

"The [new badge] is the right thing to do to recognize those soldiers in units purposefully reorganized to serve as infantry and conducting infantry-unique missions."

Criteria for the Close Combat Badge, unveiled last week, will mirror that of the Army's 62-year-old Combat Infantry Badge, awarded to infantry units and special forces who engage in active ground combat.

Hagenbeck said the CCB was created after generals in Iraq on terror complained that "de facto infantry" — non-infantry units that have been reorganized

Proposed guide for new badge

Who is eligible?:

■ Colonel or below for officers; all enlisted soldiers are eligible.
■ Enlisted soldiers must have a Military Occupational Specialty in Armor or Cavalry (CMF 19), Artillery (CMF 13), or Combat Engineer (CMF 12).

■ Officers must have a branch or specialty officially recognized in Army Regulation 611-1 as "having a high probability to routinely engage in direct combat."

Soldiers must be:

■ Assigned or attached to an Army brigade or smaller unit that is purposefully organized to routinely conduct close combat operations and engage in direct combat, in accordance with existing Army rules and policy.

■ Under fire while engaged in active ground combat, to moving into contact and destroy the enemy with direct fire.
■ Battle or campaign participation is not sufficient to qualify for this award; the unit must have been in active ground combat.

Effective date:

Sept. 11, 2001 (retroactive)

Source: U.S. Army

for that type of combat missions — were not being properly recognized for their work.

The Close Combat Badge will be awarded to soldiers with military occupational specialties in armor, the cavalry, combat engineering, and field artillery. Officers must have a branch or specialty recognized in Army regulations as "having a high probability to routinely engage in direct

combat."

But other soldiers have complained publicly that other forces caught in Iraq have faced the same combat situations and deserve the honor as well.

On Friday, Hagenbeck called their service commendable, but said the idea behind the combat badges is to recognize those with an infantry mission.

"The CCB is for an infantry-like job," he said. "It's an emotional issue. The CCB has been around for more than 60 years, a lot of discussion went into this. The consensus was that these soldiers needed to be recognized for their job."

Officials plan to make the honor retroactive to Sept. 11, 2001, and want began awarding the new badge in March, though the actual badge will not be available until the fall.

Hagenbeck said the design for the badge has not been finalized, but plans call for the CCB's rifle to be replaced with a bayonet.

Under current Army rules, all soldiers are allowed to wear their unit patch on their right soldier as a combat patch after serving 30 days in an authorized combat area.

Hagenbeck said officials also plan to honor non-Army troops serving with CCB and CIB eligible units with those badges as well, the first time non-Army fighters would receive such an honor.

That could include both U.S. forces and foreign nationals embedded with Army combat units, Hagenbeck said.

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Reports to check of rapes

New York Daily News

NEW YORK — Stung by reports of sexual rapists in the ranks, the Pentagon said Friday it would investigate soldiers identified by a watchdog group.

More than a year after Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld declared "zero tolerance" for rape, the number of troops who claim to have been violated has nearly tripled, the Miles Foundation reported.

This indicates to us that rape in the ranks continues to be a problem in the military," said Anita Sanchez, spokeswoman for the Connecticut-based foundation. The non-profit group assists servicemembers who have been sexually assaulted.

Sanchez said the foundation has received 307 reports of sexual assault occurring over the last 18 months from soldiers serving in Iraq, Afghanistan, Kuwait and Bahrain.

"We're looking and trying to determine who these predators are," said Lt. Col. Joe Richard, a Pentagon spokesman.

Under pressure from Congress, the Defense Department recently introduced sweeping policy changes for handling sexual assaults of soldiers.

Sanchez said her organization forwarded the names of the suspected servicemembers to their respective services.

Each has been accused by two or more soldiers who came to the Miles Foundation for help. Six are in the Army, two are in the Marines and one each is in the Navy and Air Force.

Sanchez said they also have gotten reports about a private security guard who allegedly assaulted female soldiers. The alleged perpetrators also included foreign nationals.

Based on victim interviews, the group has identified 10 servicemembers and a military contractor who allegedly each sexually assaulted anywhere from two to two dozen soldiers.

Sanchez declined to release the names of the accused.

Of the 307 reports of sexual assault received by the Miles Foundation, 104 cases already have been reported to military authorities, Sanchez said.

Part of the reason for the difference in numbers may lie in how sexual assaults are defined. Often defense officials will only note alleged cases of forcible rape, she said, while the foundation figures also include less violent assaults.

And, Sanchez noted, the actual number of sex crimes could be even higher, since many of these types of offenses are not reported to authorities.

"Four of the rape victims are men and we believe the true number is higher," Sanchez said. "In a culture of silence, there is an enormous amount of shame."

Stars and Stripes reporter Leo Shane III contributed to this report.

GIs find weapons cache



A U.S. Army 1st Battalion, 24th Infantry Regiment soldier examines a cache of insurgent weapons Friday found in a car, which had previously been used to shoot at U.S. Iraqi troops, in Mosul, Iraq. Rifles, ammunition, a machine gun and rocket-propelled grenades were found.

U.S. looking into killing of 2 Afghans near base

BY STEPHEN GRAHAM

The Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — The U.S. military is investigating why American troops fatally shot two civilians outside a base near Afghanistan's western border with Iran, officials said Saturday.

U.S. troops opened fire on the two unarmed men after they entered an exclusion zone around the base on Feb. 11 near Shindand Air Base in Herat province, said a spokesman for the provincial government.

"Regrettably, two local nationals were killed, and we're investigating the situation right now," said Maj. Steve Wollman, a spokesman for the U.S. military.

The two families of the victims' had received \$2,300. Each in a "payment of condolence, but that's not an admission of guilt or wrongdoing," he said.

Wollman gave no details of the incident, but provincial government spokesman Mohammedullah Afzali identified the two men as Naib and Rasul from the nearby village of Moghlan.

He said the two had apparently

entered the area close to the base looking for wood or scrap metal to sell in the local market and had tried to run away when challenged by a group of American soldiers. The soldiers then opened fire.

"The fact is that these people were in the area near the airport where locals are not allowed," Afzali said.

"Regrettably, two local nationals were killed, and we're investigating the situation right now."

Maj. Steve Wollman
spokesman for U.S. military

have been stationed at the old Soviet-built air base in Shindand, about 340 miles west of Kabul, since bloody factional fighting last August resulted in the ouster of regional strongman Ismail Khan as governor.

Wollman said U.S. troops embedded as trainers with Afghan army units as well as American military police were at Shindand. He said he didn't know if there were any U.S. special forces there.

Protesting for release of journalist



Italians hold a giant banner reading "Let's free peace" at the start of a peace march in downtown Rome on Saturday. Demonstrators urged the release of Giuliana Sgrena, the Italian journalist kidnapped in Iraq earlier this month. Marchers included, starting from left, Pier Scolar, Sgrena's companion; Gabriele Polo, editor of Italian daily *Il Manifesto*; Franco Sgrena, Sgrena's father; and his wife, Antonietta.

Two main terror suspects surrender to Kuwaiti police

BY DIANA ELIAS
The Associated Press

KUWAIT CITY — Two main suspects wanted in connection to a terror group that planned to attack Americans and Kuwaiti security were arrested Saturday, an Interior Ministry official said.

The men surrendered to police without any exchange of fire at Al-Andalus, a suburb southwest of Kuwait City, the official said on condition of anonymity. He would not provide their names but he said they were Kuwaiti.

The Interior Ministry official said the suspects were not Khalid al-Dossari or Mohsen al-Fadhli, who had been named before as wanted men.

Kuwait has, since Jan. 10, been locked in an unprecedented battle against Muslim extremists who authorities said were planning to attack American civilians living here in Kuwait and members of the U.S. military serving here or on their way to Iraq. Kuwait's state security apparatus also was a target, according to authorities.

Four policemen and eight suspected terrorists were killed in clashes around the country last month. On Feb. 5, five wanted men surrendered to police in Sulaybiyah, west of the capital, but they were later released.

The alleged ringleader of the group, Amer

al-Enezi, died of a heart attack while in custody. He was arrested Jan. 31 in the largest shootout, in the Mubarak al-Kabir area.

The group did not carry out any of its alleged plans. In one of their safe houses, near the border with Saudi Arabia, authorities found chemicals that could be used to make bombs and handwritten instructions for making them.

Some 40 suspects, including the wife of the ringleader, were referred to prosecutors for interrogation. It is still not known if they will stand trial.

The alleged 24-member terror group included Jordanians, Saudis, Kuwaitis and stateless Arabs who have lived in this oil-rich state for decades without becoming citizens. The interior minister said they received funds from Saudis, and they embraced the ideology of Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida terror group, which is responsible for the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks in the United States.

This year's clashes have shocked Kuwait by bringing the fight against terror to their streets and for the first time, spilling Kuwaiti blood.

Kuwait has been a U.S.-ally since the 1991 Gulf War that liberated it from a seven-month Iraqi occupation. However, militant extremists who oppose the American military presence in their country have, since 2002, attacked Americans, killing one Marine and a civilian contracted to the military.

Final arguments made in senior British soldier's Iraqi abuse trial

The Associated Press

OSNABRUECK, Germany — A British soldier charged with facilitating the abuse of Iraqi detainees had no role in any mistreatment and should be commended for stopping other soldiers involved in it, his lawyer told a court-martial Friday.

In closing arguments for Cpl. Daniel Kenyon, 33, the lawyer portrayed him as an upstanding

soldier whose platoon section was "infected" by a loose atmosphere in May 2003 at a humanitarian aid warehouse being guarded by British troops outside Basra.

"Whatever went on, you know, he had nothing to do with it," lawyer Joseph Giret said during his four-hour summing-up.

Kenyon, 33, is the highest-ranking of three soldiers being tried at a British military

base in Germany. He has pleaded not guilty to aiding and abetting the abuse of detained Iraqi looters and failing to report it.

Kenyon has testified that he walked in on, and immediately stopped, the two incidents at the heart of the trial — soldiers forcing Iraqi men to simulate sex acts and hoisting an Iraqi on a forklift.

"Is there any doubt he dealt with it? He dealt with it. It came to an end," Giret said.

NATO wants all its members involved in training mission

BY PAUL AMES
The Associated Press

BRUSSELS, Belgium — NATO hopes to announce at a summit Tuesday that all 26 members have agreed to participate in some way to the alliance, which is a breakdown of what they are offering, based on calls to national armies Friday.

The mission is modest in scale. The world's most powerful military alliance has struggled to find the 160 instructors it needs to complete the first phase of the operation, which offers training for senior officers within Baghdad's heavily guarded "Green Zone."

However, alliance leaders hope the decision for all NATO members to participate will send a signal of political unity as President Bush meets with European allies and seeks to overcome divisions over the Iraq war.

"All NATO governments are looking forward to see how we can best support the new Iraqi government," NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer told NATO defense ministers last week. "It is my intention and allies' intention that by the date we have the summit on Feb. 22, all NATO allies will support the training operation."

But unity comes with conditions. NATO members that opposed the Iraq war — led by France and Germany — have refused to send any troops to the country, meaning that their contributions will be limited to funding or to training outside Iraq's borders.

This has irritated the United States, particularly since France, Germany, Belgium, Spain, Greece and Luxembourg even stopped officers assigned to NATO headquarters from traveling to Iraq as part of the mission.

Nevertheless, NATO will claim the participation of all 26 allies as a triumph that could clear the way for the mission's next stage — setting up a military academy outside Baghdad, which is likely to involve more instructors, guards and other support staff.

The academy is unlikely to be up and running until September, even though NATO had originally hoped to have it operational by the end of last year.

Alliance diplomats said Friday that they were close to a deal that would have all NATO members involved in the mission in some way. Doubts remained over France, which has offered to train 150 Iraqi military police in Qatar, but describes the offer as a bilateral agreement outside of NATO.

NATO contributions

■ **BRUSSELS, Belgium** — NATO hopes to announce at a summit Tuesday that all 26 members have agreed to participate in some way to the alliance, which is a breakdown of what they are offering, based on calls to national armies Friday.

■ **Belgium**: Offered five to 10 military driving instructors for a German-led training mission for Iraqis in the United Arab Emirates.

■ **Canada**: Offered five to 10 trainers.

■ **Czech Republic**: May send 10 instructors.

■ **Lithuania**: Two trainers on the way to Iraq, two more expected to go soon.

■ **Poland**: Plans to send up to 10 trainers, and a transport platoon of about 30.

■ **Germany**: Will contribute Turkey: Two officers serving in Baghdad; offered to train outside Iraq, considering contribution to funds.

■ **France**: Agreed to send up to 10 soldiers to Iraq to help training.

■ **Slovakia**: Sending two instructors to Iraq.

■ **Slovenia**: Offered to help training outside Iraq, probably in Jordan.

■ **Spain**: Will contribute Turkey: Two officers serving in Baghdad; offered to train outside Iraq, considering contribution to funds.

■ **United States**: Will contribute Turkey: Two officers serving in Baghdad; offered to train outside Iraq, considering contribution to funds.

■ **United Kingdom**: Will contribute Turkey: Two officers serving in Baghdad; offered to train outside Iraq, considering contribution to funds.

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60th Anniversary of Iwo Jima ~ The Reunion of Honor

The Bloodiest Battle

Years after war, Iwo Jima reunion stirs powerful memories

BY JON R. ANDERSON

Stripes and Stripes

ANRTHUR GAVLOCK looked on in horror as the amphibious assault craft in front of him moved out of its berth inside the tossing Navy warship and sunk straight to the bottom of the Pacific.

Now it was his turn. Turning to grab his rifle, Gavlock couldn't believe it. Someone had swiped it.

And so it was, 60 years ago this week, that a 19-year-old Marine private found himself wading ashore onto a strange island called Iwo Jima without a gun in what would become the bloodiest battle in Marine Corps history.

Gavlock, now 79, was among about 100 veterans of the campaign gathered at Marine Corps headquarters in Quantico, Va., on Friday morning. It was among the first events to kick off the 60th anniversary commemorations of the attack on Iwo Jima.

A wreath-laying ceremony is slated at the Iwo Jima Memorial in Washington on Saturday, under the bronze feet of the five Marines and one corpsman sailor, immortalized by Associated Press photographer Joe Rosenthal's image of the raising of the Stars and Stripes atop Mount Suribachi.

Across the globe, Marine commandant Gen. Michael Hagee is to oversee ceremonies on the black, volcanic island itself.

A linchpin in the Allied campaign to Japan, Iwo Jima served as an early warning station against American bombers. Taking the island would give three critical airfields for fighter escorts, placing them within easy striking distance of the Japanese homeland.

At Quantico, with most of the veterans of that grueling battle now well into their 70s and 80s, many shook from age instead of the fear they had to master as they stepped off their assault craft and into the chaos and carnage.

For Gavlock, now hard of hearing and wearing a red Marine Corps jacket and baseball cap emblazoned with the words "I survived Iwo Jima," it was the gruesome images of those first few hours on the island that remain his most vivid memories.



Krulak



JOE GROMELSKY/Stars and Stripes

With the famous photograph of the raising of the flag on Mount Suribachi projected on a screen in the background, modern-day Marines re-enact the event during Friday's 60th anniversary ceremony at Quantico, Va.

Dead everywhere

"Coming on the beach, the dead were everywhere, the young faces of those beautiful kids," said Gavlock, who managed to grab a rifle from among the bodies as he came ashore. "As a kid I was afraid of dead people, but it didn't take long to get over that."

Indeed, 22,000 deeply entrenched Japanese defenders would make taking the island one of the costliest battles of the war. It became the first — and still the

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only — battle in history to see more Marines wounded than enemy. One out of every four Medals of Honor earned by Marines during the war were given to veterans of Iwo Jima.

Through the 36-day assault, which began Feb. 19, 1945, some

6,800 Marines and corpsmen would die, with another 19,000 wounded.

"Think about that," retired Gen. Chuck Krulak, the Corps' 31st commandant, told those gathered in Quantico. "A Marine felt to fire every two minutes of every hour of every day for 36 days."

"Truly, you represent the greatest generation," Krulak told the veterans, "and the greatest of our Marine Corps."

Off the beach

An artilleryman with the 13th Marines, Gavlock said he feels lucky to have come out Iwo Jima without a scratch. "I guess I was my lucky number," he said.

Greg Emery wasn't so fortunate. But he didn't mind.

A Navy corpsman, Emery was wounded on day 12 of the invasion.

Petty Officer 2nd Class Neath Williams, a current corpsman, stood enraptured as Emery told how he snuck out of the field hospital he was taken to after getting hit and rejoined his unit.

Williams eyes grew wide as Emery pointed to a picture of a young medic tending the wounded — part of a display of Iwo Jima battle photos and artifacts.

"That's me," he said, explaining that he stayed with his unit for 37 days on the island before leaving once Iwo Jima was captured.

"Man, it's amazing to meet someone like that," said Williams, a veteran of the 2003 invasion of Iraq. "The things he's seen and done, he really had me floored hearing those stories."

Herb Newman was just glad to make it out alive. Already a veteran of the Marshall Island and Saipan campaigns where he'd already earned his first Purple Heart, Newman had few illusions about what he'd face on Iwo Jima.

Newman spent the first three days of the invasion trying to take the high ground of an area of the island called the Sun Quarry. "Once I got up over the top of the ridge, I got shot in the leg," he said.

It took hours for eight musicians from the 24th Marine Band — tasked with tending to the wounded — to carry Newman down to the beachhead on a stretcher.

"Of course, that was the most dangerous place on the island," he says, recalling the gut wrenching trip out to a hospital ship as the Japanese peppered his craft with gunfire. "I remember thinking, 'Here I am, about to get my second Purple Heart, and I'm not even going to make it off the beach.'"

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andersonj@mail.military.osd.mil

“Truly, you represent the greatest generation and the greatest of our Marine Corps.”

Gen. Chuck Krulak (Ret.)

U.S. Marine Corps' 31st commandant

IN THE WORLD

Brussels braces for mayhem with Bush visit

BY ROBERT WIELAARD
The Associated Press

BRUSSELS, Belgium — Brussels braces on Saturday for a three-day visit by President Bush, who starts a conciliatory swing through Europe for talks with more than two dozen European leaders.

Bush arrives Sunday evening, confident he can heal the rift with Europe that opened during his first term, notably over the Iraq war.

Brussels police are mounting an unprecedented security operation, deploying 2,500 officers — 1,000 more than usually deployed for the three or four summits that bring EU leaders to the Belgian

capital each year. An alliance of 88 environmental, human rights, peace and other groups are planning two days of protests to demand "no European complicity" in a U.S.-designed world order.

Police say protests will be cordoned off and public transportation rerouted or limited. The "Stop Bush" campaign plans protests near the U.S. embassy in downtown Brussels on Monday and near the EU headquarters on Tuesday. Its Web site accuses Bush of "crimes against humanity and the planet."



Bush

See related story
on Page 10

bassy in downtown Brussels on Monday and near the EU headquarters on Tuesday. Its Web site accuses Bush of "crimes against humanity and the planet."

It features a litany of reasons to "stop Bush," calling Washington a major obstacle to a world order "based on international law." The protesters say Bush's administration is eroding efforts to combat global warming and is guilty of "human rights violations at home and abroad in the name of nation-

al security."

On Monday, Bush meets with King Albert II at the Royal Palace and with Belgian Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt before giving a speech on trans-Atlantic relations. In the evening, he is to dine with French President Jacques Chirac, his primary opponent to the war in Iraq.

Ahead of their meetings with Bush, European leaders have signaled a keenness to narrow the gap with Washington on Iraq and other contentious issues.

In his weekly radio address Saturday, Bush said he doesn't believe the West is split between an "idealistic United States and a cynical Europe."

"America and Europe are the

pillars of the free world," Bush said.

"Leaders on both sides of the Atlantic understand that the hopes for peace in the world depend on the continued unity of free nations," he said. "We do not accept a false caricature that divides the Western world between an idealistic United States and a cynical Europe. Iraq will be a top agenda item during Bush's talks. The United States wants to see a larger international role in Iraq, particularly in training its military and police."

On Monday, EU foreign ministers are to announce the opening of an EU office in Baghdad to oversee a democracy-building program that will train hundreds of Iraqi judges and prosecutors.

U.N. team to investigate assassination of former Lebanon leader Hariri

The Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS — Secretary-General Kofi Annan is sending a team led by Ireland's deputy police commissioner to Beirut in the next few days to investigate the assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, the U.N. spokesman announced Friday.

Annan's decision to send the team is in response to a request from the U.N. Security Council that he urgently report on "the circumstances, causes and consequences" of Hariri's killing, the spokesman's statement said.

"The team will make contact with Lebanese officials and others to gather such information as necessary for the secretary-general to the council in a timely manner," the statement said. Peter Fitzgerald, the team leader, has been a deputy Irish police

commissioner since 1998 and has worked in U.N. peacekeeping operations in Namibia and Cambodia and was police commissioner in Bosnia until February 1997. He also served as a member of the independent team that investigated security at U.N. headquarters in Baghdad before the Aug. 19 bombing that killed 22 people and injured over 160.

The statement said the team going to Beirut "will consist of staff with relevant expertise" but no other names were announced.

The Security Council on Tuesday expressed grave concern at the possible impact of Hariri's assassination on the ongoing efforts of the Lebanese people to solidify democracy and stressed that the "terrorist act" must not jeopardize upcoming parliamentary elections.

The United States called on Syria to withdraw its 15,000 troops from Lebanon, as a U.N. resolution adopted Sept. 2 called for.

Submerged in river since World War II



A man examines a World War II Russian T-38 tank lifted from the Neva River outside St. Petersburg, Russia, on Friday. The light amphibious tank, on the battlefield, was discovered only recently. After restoration, the tank will be placed in the memorial dedicated to the lifting of the Leningrad blockade to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the victory over Nazi Germany.

U.N. officials discuss Lubbers' future

UNITED NATIONS — U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan consulted lawyers on the future of Rudi Lubbers as U.N. refugee chief, clearly angered at the resurgence of allegations of sexual harassment against him, this time with graphic details.

There were growing indications Friday that Lubbers could be forced out as Annan tries to deal with other scandals, including the U.N. oil-for-food program in Iraq and sexual abuse of children in the Congo by U.N. peacekeepers sent to protect them.

U.N. diplomats, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Annan was taking legal advice on the next steps following a meeting with Lubbers which focused on his remaining 10 months as U.N. high commissioner for refugees. Rumors that Annan wants Lubbers to step down intensified following publication Friday by a British newspaper of details of a previously secret U.N. investigation of allegations that Lubbers sexually harassed a female employee.

Spanish PM appeals for big turnout

MADRID, Spain — The prime minister made an emotional appeal for massive turnout in Spain's referendum Sunday on the European Union constitution — the document's first test at grass-roots level — saying it will make the continent safer and help fight terrorism.

Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero concluded campaigning for the referendum on Friday night, saying the constitution was as important for Spaniards as the one they approved for their own country in 1978, restoring a democratic charter three years after the death of Gen. Francisco Franco.

Report: North Korea done with U.S.

BEIJING — North Korea no longer wants direct negotiations with the United States to ease the nuclear standoff, China's state news agency Saturday cited a North Korean foreign ministry spokesman as saying, as a top Chinese official met the communist regime's No. 2 leader.

The unnamed spokesman also reportedly reiterated the communist regime's Feb. 10 decision to indefinitely suspend its participation in six-party nuclear disarmament talks. Following that announcement, Pyongyang demanded one-on-one meetings with the United States to discuss the nuclear dispute — a move Washington rejected.

The North Korean Foreign Ministry spokesman said Pyongyang was no longer willing to hold direct talks with Washington because of what it described as the United States' alleged persistent attempts to try to topple the communist regime, the Xinhua News Agency said.

From The Associated Press



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Clinton and Bush tour tsunami-hit areas in Thailand

BY CHRISTOPHER TORCHIA
The Associated Press

BAN NAM KHEM, Thailand — Former U.S. presidents George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton flew Saturday in American military helicopters to a fishing village that was devastated by the Dec. 26 South Asian tsunami, and visited a memorial wall honoring tourists from around the world who died in the disaster.

The two former presidents, who are leading private U.S. relief efforts, also dined with Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra as they began a tour that will include stops in the next two days in Indonesia, Sri Lanka and the Maldives, which were all hard-hit by the tsunami.

In the shattered village of Ban Nam Khe, school children waving American flags welcomed Bush and Clinton. The two men stood in intense tropical heat as two children who lost family members in the tsunami presented them with drawings of the disaster, one showing a giant wave

and a rescue helicopter and the other depicting floodwaters sweeping away people, cars and boats.

The two former presidents were asked by President George W. Bush, the elder Bush's son, to lead the U.S. effort to provide private aid to the hundreds of thousands of tsunami victims.

"I don't think there's ever been a tragedy that affected the heart-beat of the American people as much as this tsunami has done," the senior Bush said in the shattered village of Ban Nam Khe. "I don't think you can put a limit on it. It's so devastating. They're still finding wreckage, still actually some bodies being recovered."

After arriving on the Thai resort island of Phuket on Saturday, the two men made their way by helicopter and motorcade to Ban Nam Khe. Back in Phuket, they visited a white wooden wall bearing the flags of several dozen nations that lost citizens in the tsunami, and held a moment's silence after two Thai military servicemen in white uniforms laid a wreath.



Former presidents George H.W. Bush, right, and Bill Clinton, left, tour rebuilding efforts from the Dec. 26 tsunami in Thailand on Saturday.

The wall is adjacent to a victim identification center "where Kenyon Worldwide Disaster Management, a U.S.-based company, is helping to repatriate bodies. At least 1,000 bodies remain at the site."

The former political adversaries said their old differences were irrelevant to the task of providing relief.

"On issues about which there can be no debate, there should be no problems," Clinton said as Bush stood nearby. Clinton said estimates show that one-third of American households have made contributions to tsunami relief.

"When it comes to helping people, politics is aside," Bush said.

"I've enjoyed working with President Clinton. We were political adversaries. The current president and he don't always see eye to eye on issues. But that is not what's important here."

In Ban Nam Khe, villagers greeted them, and a group of Thai school children in red caps and white shirts waved paper American flags.

Clinton praised Thailand's response to the calamity and said he and Bush hoped they could learn more about how to help. At a news conference with Thaksin, he said governments and private individuals had committed \$7 billion to relief in Asia, and that another \$4 billion is needed for a reconstruction process that could take two years.

Brits test new rules on hunting

The Associated Press

DIDMARTON, England — Hunters gathered in farmyards, country estates and muddy fields across England and Wales on Saturday to test the limits of the government's ban on hunting with dogs.

The police promised to be watching on the first weekend since hunting with hounds was banned.

"The law says a person is guilty of an offense if he hunts a wild mammal with a dog. That is a fairly straightforward piece of legislation," Suffolk County Council Councillor Alastair McWhirter said Saturday.

There was frost on the fields but fire in the rhetoric, as thousands turned out in Didmarton in western England to applaud the Duke of Beaufort's Hunt, one of the country's most prestigious. The day's plan was not to kill a fox but to stage a drag hunt, following the hounds down a scent trail.

Lord Mancroft, 47, a former hunt master, blamed the ban on Tony Blair, "the charlatan, the ham actor who is our prime minister."

Blair vainly promoted a compromise which would have allowed strictly regulated hunting, but neither the hunting opponents in the House of Commons nor the hunting supporters in the House of Lords gave ground. Instead, the Commons finally rammed through the ban which became effective Friday.

"Thursday was one of the saddest days of my life. I blubbed like a baby at the thought that we might never hunt again," Mancroft said. "But I am not sad any more. I am bloody angry!"

The pro-hunting Countryside Alliance said thousands of hunters were expected to attend more than 250 hunts planned around the country.

The new law bans all hunting with hounds, including the pursuit of rabbits and deer, in England and Wales. Scotland already has a similar ban in force.

Freezing winter kills 128 kids in Afghanistan

BY STEPHEN GRAHAM
The Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — Disease fueled by freezing weather has killed more than 120 Afghan children, with desperate parents feeding their children opium in a bid to alleviate their suffering, the health minister said Saturday.

A total of 128 children have died of ailments including pneumonia, measles and whooping cough, Mohammed Amin Fatemi said. He had no figures for cold-related deaths including adults.

"Many parents are giving opium to the children in the belief it will stop the coughing," Fatemi said. "Maybe for two or three hours it will sedate them, but it is poison for their bodies and can turn them into addicts."

Hundreds of Afghans have reportedly died since heavy snow and freezing temperatures set in across much of Afghanistan in late December, highlighting how vulnerable people remain after more than two decades of impoverishing conflict.

Some have died in accidents and avalanches, while former refugees even in the capital have apparently frozen to death in makeshift camps, also exposing a lack of shelter and aid despite three years of international aid.

Hardest hit appears to be the western province of Ghor, deep in the Hindu Kush moun-



Afghan refugee children warm themselves around a fire at the Chaman-e-Ozuri camp in Kabul on Thursday. At least 128 children have died of diseases including pneumonia, measles and whooping cough during Afghanistan's exceptionally cold winter.

tains, where deep snow has cut off scores of villages.

Fatemi said 62 children had died there in the past three weeks; 46 had died in Kabul, and 20 had died in Badakhshan in the remote northeast.

He said officials were checking reports of cold-related deaths from other provinces and said a statement by Catholic Relief Services, a U.S.-based relief group, that 265 people had died in western Afghanistan were plausible.

Two Afghan helicopters had carried three tons of medicine, including antibiotics, and two teams of doctors and nurses to the area, he said. Similar teams had been dispatched to

seven other provinces.

CRS said on Friday its staff had reached only 6,000 people in 16 of the 250 villages in Ghor. Up to \$200,000 more has been funneled through the group to try to aid the population with stoves, fuel, medicine and snow-clearing machinery, it said.

P.M. Jose, the group's chief representative in Kabul, said his staff had confirmed about 80 child deaths but feared the total will rise "much higher" as other areas are reached. He declined to repeat reported comments from a colleague saying the child toll could top 1,000.

The United Nations and the U.S. military were also airlifting supplies to Zabul and Ghor.

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IN THE STATES

Bush lays out goals for European trip

BY DEB RIECHMANN
The Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — On the eve of his trip to Europe to patch the trans-Atlantic relationship, President Bush says he doesn't believe the West is split between an "idealistic United States and a cynical Europe."

"America and Europe are the pillars of the free world," Bush said in his weekly radio address Saturday, the day before he leaves on a five-day trip to Belgium, Germany and Slovakia.

"Leaders on both sides of the Atlantic understand that the hopes for peace in the world depend on the continued unity of free nations," he said. "We do not accept a false caricature that divides the Western world between an idealistic United States and a cynical Europe."

Iraq will be a top agenda item during the president's talks with European leaders and officials of NATO, the European Union and the European Commission. The United States wants to see a larger international role in Iraq, particularly in training its military and police.

U.S. hopes for a larger NATO role suffered a setback last Sunday when Germany rebuffed the alliance's request for help

Mungo Bush, Scottish sheepherder

WASHINGTON — President Mungo Bush?

"Can you imagine if my name had been Mungo Bush?" the president joked Friday when a British reporter asked him to autograph a book for his son, Mungo. Bush seemed amused by the name.

The exchange occurred as Bush was being interviewed at the White House by European journalists in advance of his trip to Belgium, Germany and Slovakia, beginning Sunday. He also was looking forward to going to Scotland in July for a

meeting of the Group of Eight industrialized nations.

That prompted Bush to tell a tale about meeting a Texan when he was at a sheep farm in Scotland back in the 1950s.

"I worked there as a 14-year-old kid," Bush said. "I went from Texas to Scotland to work on a sheep farm. I'm riding a bike. ... A big tour bus stops. They get off and a woman with a Texas accent [said]: 'Look at the little Scottish boy!'"

"I kept my mouth shut," Bush said.

— The Associated Press

to protect U.N. operations in Iraq, France and Germany, which opposed the U.S.-led war that toppled Saddam Hussein, have prevented the alliance from developing a wider role in Iraq, and have refused to send their own troops, even on the training mission in Baghdad that NATO has authorized.

Germany has emphasized its efforts to help Iraq in other ways — through military

and police training outside the country, economic aid and debt relief. France has stressed its command of NATO peacekeeping missions in Kosovo and Afghanistan.

In his radio address, Bush didn't mention the NATO mission.

Instead, he singled out nations that helped with the Jan. 30 elections in Iraq.

"In Iraq, our shared commitment to free elections has stripped the car bombers and

assassins of their most powerful weapon, their claim to represent the wishes and aspirations of the Iraqi people," he said.

"In these elections, the European Union provided vital technical assistance. NATO is helping to train army officers, police and civilian administrators of a new Iraq and 21 of our European coalition partners are providing forces on the ground."

Outlining his goals for the trip, the president also said he would discuss how to best advance peace between Israel and the Palestinians; trade issues; and reducing European barriers to American agricultural goods.

"Even the best of friends do not agree on everything," he said, adding that America and Europe need to cooperate to fight terrorism and poverty and promote trade and peace.

In advance of his trip, Bush on Friday spoke of Iran during interviews at the White House with broadcasters and correspondents from Russia, France, Belgium, Slovakia and Germany.

He said the United States does not intend to attack Iran to crush its suspected nuclear weapons program and expressed hopes that a European diplomatic initiative would persuade Tehran to abandon any such program.

Battered Calif. soaked by new round of storms

The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Thunderstorms pelting 60 mph wind gusts, soaking rain and nickel-size hail pounded already waterlogged Southern California on Saturday, closing major highways and threatening to set off mudslides.

In Conchita, the coastal hamlet where 10 people were killed by a huge landslide last month, was deserted as the U.S. Geological Survey warned that none of the roughly 150 remaining homes could be considered safe. The town northwest of Los Angeles faces a "rather bewildering variety of landslide hazards," a USGS report said.

A two-mile stretch of Interstate 5 through the City of Commerce, south of downtown Los Angeles, was closed for several hours early Saturday after it was flooded by a foot of water, the California Highway Patrol said. Crews had to pump the highway dry.

Similar flooding was reported along the 710 Freeway in Long Beach.

Southern coastal and valley areas could see several inches of rain before a series of sporadic storms lets up by Wednesday, and mountain regions could get as much as 2 feet of snow by late Saturday, the National Weather Service said.

Drenching rain on Friday closed a state highway near Fillmore in Ventura County and prompted flood advisories in Los Angeles County.

In Moorpark, mudslides forced Amtrak to cancel Los Angeles-to-Santa Barbara commuter rail service from Friday night through Saturday.

The rain was also blamed for collapsing the flat roof of a Virgin Megastore in Burbank. No one was hurt, but the collapse and water caused at least \$100,000 in damage, the Fire Department said.

Mudslides threatened several homes in Culver City, in Los Angeles County, and in the Orange County cities of Mission Viejo and Anaheim.



Koko, the gorilla who converses in sign language, is seen admiring a kitten in 1985. Two fired caretakers for Koko have sued their former boss, claiming they were exposed by her to press her breasts as a way of bonding with the gorilla.

AP

Signing gorilla's ex-handlers sue over breast-baring claim

BY JESSIE SEYFFER
Knight Ridder Newspapers

SAN JOSE, Calif. — We already knew that Koko the gorilla liked sign language, kittens and painting. But nipples?

That's what two fired handlers at the Gorilla Foundation in Woodside, Calif., say they were told by the organization's president, Francine "Penny" Patterson. In a lawsuit filed Tuesday in San Mateo County court, the handlers say Patterson demanded the two women bare their breasts to the famed lowland primate because Patterson believes the animal enjoys it.

An attorney for the Foundation flatly denied the allegations Friday.

The handlers, Nancy Alperin and Kendra Keller, claim that last summer, Patterson told them their job status would suffer if they did not indulge Koko's "nipple fetish."

On several occasions in May through June of last year, Patterson told Alperin that "exposing one's breasts to Koko was a normal component to developing a personal bond with the gorilla," the suit alleges.

Patterson pitched the idea to Koko, who she thought was getting "bored" with seeing Patterson's bosom, the lawsuit claimed. "You need to see new nipples," Patterson allegedly said.

The women refused. A few weeks later, they alerted the state health department of sanitary problems at the wooded gorilla preserve, such as gorilla urine being stored in a refrigerator with human food. The Foundation fired them on Aug. 6, the day after the health department inspected the facility, according to the lawsuit. Court records show the inspectors fined the preserve \$300 on Aug. 24.

Alperin and Keller are suing Patterson and the foundation for sexual discrimination, wrongful termination, and negligent infliction of emotional distress, among other allegations. They are seeking just over \$1 million in damages.

Gorilla Foundation attorney Todd Roberts declined to discuss the allegations in detail Friday but released the following statement: "The Gorilla Foundation is a well-respected non-profit organization with a 29-year history of research, education and conservation programs. For the attorney for plaintiffs to manipulate a purported employment issue and mislead it purely for publicity purposes is particularly hurtful to the noble efforts of such a reputable organization. We unequivocally deny these allegations and are confident that this case lacks merit."

Koko, who is 33, made headlines several years ago after learning more than 1,000 words in American Sign Language from Patterson. In 1998, the female gorilla used her abilities to conduct an Internet chat with fans over America Online.

American Samoa declared major disaster area

PAGO PAGO, American Samoa — President Bush on Friday declared American Samoa a major disaster area following Hurricane Olaf, which wiped out nearly all homes in at least one village in the Manua Islands.

Olaf, a Category 5 hurricane, hit Wednesday with sustained winds of 160 mph and gusts up to 190 mph. Waves up to 40 feet high hit some islands.

There were no reports of deaths on the islands, but two fishermen caught in the storm remained missing Friday. American Samoa's main island of Tutuila suffered minor damage, but the cyclone heavily damaged parts of the Manua Islands, which also are part of the territory.

From The Associated Press

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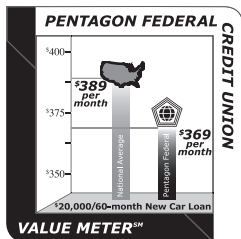


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Bishops: New abuse claims mostly old cases

BY RACHEL ZOLL

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Roman Catholic bishops say the 1,092 new sex abuse claims against American priests and deacons last year do not signal that molesters are rampant in parishes today.

Most of the alleged abuse occurred decades ago and nearly three-quarters of the 756 accused clerics had died, been defrocked or been removed from public ministry before the claims were made in 2004, church leaders said Friday.

The figures came from a survey U.S. bishops commissioned to help restore trust in their leadership after the abuse crisis erupted in January 2002 in the Archdiocese of Boston and spread nationwide.

A companion audit found that nearly all the nation's 195 dioceses were fully complying with the child protection programs that prelates mandated nearly three years ago. Dioceses and religious orders said they spent more than \$20 million on child protection last year.

Still, the financial fallout continues. Kathleen McChesney, head of the bishops' Of-

fice of Child and Youth Protection, said the total payout to victims has now climbed to at least \$840 million since 1950.

"The crisis of sexual abuse of minors within the Catholic Church is not over," McChesney said. "What is over is the denial that this problem exists."

The audit was conducted by teams comprised mainly of former FBI agents who visited dioceses across the country.

"The crisis of sexual abuse of minors within the Catholic Church is not over. What is over is the denial that this problem exists."

Kathleen McChesney

Head, bishops' Office of Child and Youth Protection

Victims' groups called the audits misleading, saying bishops had too much control over the review and victims had too little input.

They also argued that revelations about the large number of new claims in 2004 was evidence that abuse was much more widespread than church leaders had previously been willing to acknowledge.

Last year, the bishops released an un-

precedented statistical review that found 4,392 priests had been accused of molesting minors in 10,667 cases between 1950 and 2002 alone. Like that report, the new survey found that most of the alleged victims were boys from the ages of 10 to 14.

David Clohessy, national director of the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests, said it would be "reckless" to conclude that no children were at risk of abuse now in the church. The bishops said only 22 of the new claims came from people who are minors now.

The others were from adults who said they had been victimized as young children. Asked whether prelates had taken steps to hold each other accountable on abuse, Bishop William Skylstad, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, said it was a "complex issue."

Only the pope can discipline bishops, who independently run their dioceses.

Victims groups say some bishops continue to keep guilty priests in ministry. At least 148 clergy were permanently barred from church work last year, McChesney said.

"I can't second-guess the individual decisions of bishops," said Skylstad, of Spokane, Wash.



U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops President William Skylstad takes part in a news conference at the National Press Club in Washington on Friday, where he said prelates holding each other accountable for abuse is a "complex issue."



A customer looks at videos in a Newark, N.J., Blockbuster store. The state of New Jersey filed a lawsuit Friday charging that Blockbuster Inc. failed to disclose key terms in its new late fees policy.

N.J. claims Blockbuster's new late fee policy violates consumer laws

BY JEFFREY GOLD

The Associated Press

NEWARK, N.J. — The state of New Jersey claims Blockbuster Inc., the nation's largest movie-rental chain, has violated the state's consumer protection laws with its new policy on late fees.

In a lawsuit filed Friday, the state charged that Blockbuster failed to disclose key terms in the policy, including that overdue rentals are automatically converted to a sale on the eighth day after the due date.

The state is seeking restitution for customers whose overdue rentals were converted to a sale.

It also wants compensation for people who were charged late fees by stores that were not participating in the new policy, but that failed to make that obvious.

State Attorney General Peter C. Harvey on Friday called the company's advertising and marketing "deceptive." He said state investigators began visiting dozens of the 170 Blockbuster stores in New Jersey even before receiving a complaint, and found that employees gave misleading or erroneous information on the policy.

To date, one aggrieved consumer has contacted the state, Harvey said, adding, "We will be flooded with complaints from peo-

ple who will tell us this is their experience, too."

The lawsuit was filed in state Superior Court in Trenton.

In a statement, the Dallas-based chain said it has "taken a number of very thorough steps to let customers know how our new program works. Blockbuster has trained store employees on how to effectively communicate the program to customers, both on the sales floor and at check-out."

Blockbuster eliminated late fees on games and movies starting Jan. 1, although customers who miss a one-week grace period will be billed for buying the item or charged a \$1.25 restocking fee.

Panel: Painkillers' benefits outweigh risks

BY RANDOLPH E. SCHMID

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The popular painkillers Celebrex and Bextra are likely to stay on the market, and Vioxx may join them, now that government advisers have concluded their benefits outweigh their risks.

The advisers said Friday that people who depend on these drugs should be allowed to keep using them despite risks of heart problems and strokes. They suggested the prescription products carry strong warnings and recommended a long-term study.

While the Food and Drug Administration isn't required to follow the recommendations of its advisory groups, it generally does.

Celebrex and Bextra, made by Pfizer Inc., are widely sold and

are likely to remain so following the recommendations. The panel voted 31-1 to keep Celebrex on sale and 17-13 with two abstaining for Bextra.

Merck & Co., which pulled Vioxx off the market Sept. 30, suggested Thursday that a positive ruling by the advisers might lead it to consider putting the drug back on sale. But the vote recommending that it be made available to consumers was close, 17-15.

Since Vioxx was removed from the market voluntarily, it remains an approved drug. Merck issued a statement following the vote saying only that it was looking forward to talks with the FDA.

Meeting Chairman Alistair J.J. Wood of Vanderbilt University Medical School said, "The data are very compelling. Vioxx

is substantially worse than the others."

Studies varied in the amount of hazard for each product. Wood indicated there was about a 1 percent increase in risk of heart problems from Celebrex, a seemingly small number that can translate into a lot of problems over the entire population.

But the problems didn't occur at the normal dose of 200 milligrams, the panel was told. Only when people began taking 400-milligram doses in a colon polyp study did troubles show up.

The group was unanimous in saying the drugs, known as Cox-2 inhibitors, pose risks of heart trouble.

The advisers suggested changes to the way the drugs are sold, such as placing a "black box" warning on them to alert consumers to potential risks.

Gunman kills co-worker at Michigan company

TAYLOR, Mich. — A man opened fire at a Michigan paper company Friday after he was fired from his job, wounding his supervisor and killing a woman who tried to intervene, authorities said.

The employee died at a hospital. The injured supervisor who helped disarm the gunman and hold him for police was expected to survive.

The gunman was to be charged Saturday. No names were immediately released.

According to authorities, the violence erupted at the International Paper Co., where the supervisor fired the gunman because the company was not satisfied with his performance.

Energy burst from neutron star largest ever

GREENBELT, Md. — A massive burst of energy exploded from a far-off neutron star last December, the brightest flash of light ever detected in beyond our solar system that packed more energy than the sun emits every 150,000 years, scientists said Friday.

The Dec. 27 flare was by far the largest of three such giant outbursts of gamma rays detected in the last 35 years from neutron stars, the densely packed and supercharged remnants of a collapsed star.

"This is a once-in-a-lifetime event," David Palmer, a scientist at the Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico and lead author of a paper on the flare.

The energy burst was not visible to humans and the gamma rays were blocked by the Earth's atmosphere as they rushed by.

From the Associated Press

Lack of closure haunts victims of club fire

Two years after R.I. nightclub fire, many families and survivors feel little resolution

BY ELIZABETH ZUCKERMAN

The Associated Press

PROVIDENCE, R.I. — In the two years since The Station nightclub fire in West Warwick killed 100 people and injured 200 others, the state's fire codes have been tightened, three people have been criminally charged and funds to help the victims have paid out millions of dollars.

But those stronger fire codes have been since then loosened, the criminal trial won't start until next year and some families continue to struggle with financial challenges brought on by crippling injuries or the deaths of their loved ones.

Two years after the Feb. 20, 2003, fire, the survivors and victims' families are still waiting for resolution.

Anne Marie D'Alessio, director of the Rhode Island Victims' Advocacy and Support Center, said that for many people, the second anniversary of the fire is harder than the first.

"Last year, people were still in shock," she said. Now, "reality is setting in more."

Nightclub owners Jeffrey and Michael Derdarian, and Daniel Biechle, the former tour manager for the band Great White, pleaded innocent in December 2003 to 2003 counts of involuntary manslaughter. Their criminal trial isn't expected to begin until January 2006 at the earliest.

The fire was started after the band's pyrotechnics set on fire highly flammable foam that had been placed around the stage as soundproofing.

For those affected by the fire, waiting for that trial is difficult, D'Alessio said.

"While people are still moving forward ... you're kind of held hostage," she said. "There's no closure. That's a myth. But you can close chapters."

Lawsuits against the three men, as well as members of the

Statehouse holds Station memorial

BY ELIZABETH ZUCKERMAN

The Associated Press

PROVIDENCE, R.I. — Nearly two years later, Gina Matterna said the fire that took her sister's life is as hard to face as it was when it happened.

But, surrounded by others who lost loved ones in The Station nightclub fire, she smiled anyway as she recalled the big sister she called a partner in crime.

"She was so fun, so full of life. She was just crazy. She would do anything on a dare," Matterna said on Thursday, remembering Tammy Matterna-Houss, whose beaming face she wore printed on her shirt.

Matterna, 21, of Warwick, and others affected by the fire gathered at the Statehouse on Thursday evening for a ceremony to mark the fire's second anniversary.

Gov. Don Carcieri and his wife, Sue, laid a wreath of white flowers and blue ribbons for the victims and the others affected by the blaze. It was to remain in the Statehouse Rotunda for a week.

Sarah Mancini of North Kingstown lost her son Keith in the fire.

"I found that this year was harder than last year," she said.

Mancini said she appreciated the ceremony because she said it's evidence the state has not forgotten those affected by the fire.

"To me, that is the most important thing in the world, that they're not forgetting us," she said.

The dozens of others who lined the stairs in the Statehouse Rotunda on Thursday were a comfort, she said.

"Two years seems like a long time, but it's not. Nothing gets resolved, nothing gets fixed," Matterna said. "Every day, I relate that day, and the next day, and the three days we waited to hear" about Tammy.

band, state officials and a host of companies, are on hold while the criminal case goes forward.

While the legal issues have crawled, there are signs of progress.

In September, the largest single source of charitable help for those affected by the fire, The Station Nightclub Fire Relief Fund,

stopped providing direct financial assistance. It had distributed about \$2.76 million for funerals, housing, emergency travel, food, clothing and a range of social services.

Other financial help has come from the state Crime Victims Compensation Fund. Survivors of the fire and victims' families qual-



House Speaker William Murphy, D-West Warwick, holds a wreath remembering the victims of The Station nightclub fire Thursday, prior to the memorial service in Providence, R.I.

"It's just good to know I'm not crazy," she said, as she watched other victims' family members and survivors exchanging hugs and wiping their eyes.

ified for the fund after the Derdarians and Biechle were criminally charged.

Catherine Avila, the state's deputy treasurer for administration, said the state has received 250 applications to the fund, paid 117 of the claims, and is reviewing the others.

Another small step forward for

Second anniversary

What's changed since last year? Strict fire codes enacted after the deadly blaze have been loosened in some instances.

What hasn't? Many survivors and victims' families are still turning to charity funds to help out with expenses such as counseling, health insurance and child care.

What's on the horizon? The criminal case won't start until at least next January. The civil trial isn't expected to start until the criminal trial is finished. And a memorial families hope to build on the site of the fire might have to wait for the civil suits to be resolved.

From The Associated Press

victims' families is a recent decision by the attorney general's office to release to families the personal effects found in the rubble of the club.

Less than five months after the fire, Gov. Don Carcieri signed into law what was believed to be one of the toughest sets of fire-safety regulations in the nation.

By July 1, nightclubs and other places of assembly that hold 300 or more people must install sprinklers.

In the past year, however, lawmakers responded to pleas from businesses who said they couldn't afford the changes, or couldn't make them in time, empowering a state board to grant extensions for meeting the new codes.

Another disappointment for fire victims' families is the lack of progress on work to build a memorial where the club once stood — where many say they feel closest to those they lost.

The property's owner, Triton Realty, initially said it would donate the two-thirds of an acre for a memorial, but backed off when litigants named the company as a defendant in civil lawsuits.

Family pleas for location of missing daughter's remains

The Associated Press

DAYTON, Ohio — The parents of a girl missing since 1999, apparently killed by a van, appealed publicly Thursday for the man accused of disposing of her body to tell them where she is.

Nine-year-old Erica Baker vanished while walking her dog near her home in Kettering, in southwest Ohio. Prosecutors say they believe she was hit by a van and her body was disposed of.

Earlier this month, a prison inmate, Christian John Gabriel, 33, was indicted on charges of abuse of a corpse and tampering with evidence. No one else has been charged.

Erica's parents, Greg and Misty Baker, saw him for the first time Thursday as he was arraigned via a video hookup in the

Montgomery County Common Pleas Court.

"All I've got to say is: Christian Gabriel, you know where she is, you know what they did with her. Just give us our daughter," Greg Baker said to reporters.

Prosecutors have not said why they believe that people disposed of the girl's body, or why they believe the death was not reported as an accident. They do say they think Gabriel may have been driving the van.

Gabriel, who is serving a nine-month prison sentence for receiving stolen property, said nothing during the arraignment.

Authorities are also seeking to obtain the testimony of attorney Beth Lewis, a former public defender, about what she knows about the case. A client of Lewis' who died in 2001 may have been in the van that hit the girl, authorities have said.



Misty Baker, the mother of 9-year-old Erica Baker, whose picture is in the foreground, talks Thursday about her daughter during an interview at her Dayton, Ohio, home.

Casino seeks fat cats but shuns big waitresses

N.J.'s Borgata institutes weight policy for its cocktail servers

BY JOHN CURRAN
The Associated Press

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. — The Borgata Hotel Casino & Spa has told cocktail servers if they pack on too many pounds, they'll get an unpaid suspension to lose the weight — or be fired.

The policy will apply to anyone gaining more than 7 percent of their body weight; weight gain related to pregnancy or a medical condition will be exempt, casino officials said. The company will pay to put the offender through a weight-loss program during the up-to-90-day suspension.

The policy was laid out in a letter to employees last week. It infuriated some women's advocates.

"Women should not have to starve themselves just to keep their jobs," said Diana Zuckerman, president of the National Research Center for Women & Families, a Washington, D.C.-based advocacy group. "The policy places enormous stress on all the women and encourages eating disorders to reach a totally arbitrary goal."

The casino, whose edgy marketing themes and sexy accents have helped bowl over the competition since opening in July 2003, contends there's nothing wrong with setting weight limits for its 210 costumed beverage servers — 160 servers dubbed Borgata Babes and 50 other male and female bartenders.

A Borgata vice president, Cassie Fireman, said the policy clarifies existing appearance standards that women servers should have "natural hourglass figures" and men "V-shaped torsos, broad shoulders and slim waists." No weight limits were ever set, however, she said.

"Our costumed beverage servers are a huge part of our marketing and our branding image," she said. "We feel it's fair, we feel it's legal, we feel it's what our customers have come to expect at Borgata."

Local 54 of the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees union has filed a grievance.



Borgata cocktail servers Megan Mercado, left, and Sara Jamison fill orders for customers at the Borgata Hotel Casino & Spa in Atlantic City, N.J. Beginning Monday, the casino is imposing weight limits on its cocktail servers that — if violated — could lead to their suspension or even termination.

Vulcan Nick Miller, Duke of Klinker, runs up 5th Street on Feb. 5 during the Winter Carnival's Tourlight Parade in St. Paul, Minn.



Alleged Vulcan grope casts pall over future of Minnesota group

BY AMY FORLITI
The Associated Press

ST. PAUL, Minn. — In their blazing red capes, super-hero suits and ski goggles, the boisterous men of the Vulcans have carried out merry mischief during the city's Winter Carnival for more than 100 years.

But allegations this month that the group's leader groped three women in a bar have raised questions about the future of one of the most colorful pieces of St. Paul's history.

"I don't want to see them go away," said Gina Kuntz, 32, of St. Paul, who remembered the excitement she felt as a child when the Vulcans came barreling down a parade float of always trying to get their attention. They were fun... I thought they were like clowns."

Carnival organizers last week granted a leave of absence to the group's leader, Tom Trudeau, also known as Vulcanus Rex, and restricted the group's activities. Bob Vilgus, the festival CEO, said a special panel would consider changing the way the group operates.

The best-known practice of the Vulcans — mark-

ing people with grease paint as a sign of allegiance — has drawn some complaints over the years, especially from women who did not want to be marked.

According to legend, the Vulcans' antics during the 10-day carnival usher in warmer weather. But the group also makes year-round appearances in their costumes.

The charge against Trudeau stems from the group's "garter ritual," in which Vulcans place a garter on a woman's leg. Three bartenders say Trudeau groped them as other Vulcans held up their capes to shield him.

Trudeau has pleaded not guilty to three gross misdemeanor or counts of fifth-degree sexual conduct. He is free on bail.

The allegation came during this year's carnival, which ended Feb. 6. The case has incensed some former Vulcans.

"We're not a bunch of dirty, nasty old men out there being a bunch of drunks," said Hovie Register, who was the Vulcans' leader in 1996. "We do too much good to have this be our black eye."

He said all potential Vulcans go through a screening process, including a criminal background check.



Tom Trudeau, aka Vulcanus Rex

Survey: Police vary widely on prostitution enforcement

BY THOMAS HARGROVE
Scripps Howard News Service

America's prostitutes are learning that some streets are tougher to walk than others.

Police departments in many cities routinely arrest thousands of women — and sometimes their male clients — in aggressive programs to suppress street prostitution. But many other law-enforcement agencies make only token arrests, especially in upscale suburbs where police admit that call-girl operations frequently flourish through openly advertised escort services and massage parlors.

"Prostitutes don't carry guns. They carry condoms. So it's easy to arrest them. And it's fun," complained former San Francisco prostitute Robyn Few, founder of the Sex Workers Outreach Project, which advocates decriminalization of prostitution.

The rates at which sex workers and their clients are arrested vary dramatically from state to state, according to a Scripps Howard News Service study of federal arrest reports, and vary even among police agencies within each state. "It all is determined by who ever the local law-enforcement leadership is and what sort of policies they want to make," said the Rev. Ann Hayman, program director of the Mary Magdalene Project to help sex workers in Van Nuys, Calif., near Los Angeles.

Experts warn that low arrest rates probably do not mean communities are free of prostitution, although it may mean fewer women literally are walking the streets.

"Local police and prosecutors sometimes make the judgment

Prostitution arrests

Here are the 10 police departments with the highest per capita arrest rates for prostitution according to a Scripps Howard News Service analysis of the FBI's Uniform Crime Report for 2002.

The first figures are the reported number of prostitution-related arrests for that year, the second shows the arrest rate per 100,000 population.

City	Arrests per 100,000
Elizabeth, N.J.	609
Fort Worth, Texas	423
Atlanta	314
Las Vegas	420
Baltimore	309
Dayton, Ohio	279
Hartford, Conn.	274
Inglewood, Calif.	205
Memphis, Tenn.	203
Chicago	190

Scripps Howard News Service

that indoor prostitution is preferable to the outdoor kind because it is less noticeable. The more attractive, healthy women are able to work the indoor prostitution," said University of Wisconsin law professor Michael Scott, a former police chief in Florida.

The Scripps Howard study examined prostitution arrest rates for 269 police departments, comparing the number of arrests in 2002 to the size of the population under each police jurisdiction. Nationally, there was an average of 46 prostitution-related arrests for every 100,000 people.

California leads the country in prostitution arrests, with 12,351 of the nation's 67,287 total.

Dangers stir 'oops center'

Study shows our brains warn us of bad situations

Scripted Howard News Service

That odd feeling that things around us just aren't right, that something bad is about to happen, apparently has roots not in the paranormal but in a structure right in the top of our brains, a new study has found.

Researchers at Washington University in St. Louis report Friday in the journal *Science* that they have identified a brain region that acts as an early-warning system, working even at the subconscious level to help recognize and avoid high-risk situations.

"Our brains are better at picking up subtle warning signs than we previously thought," said Joshua Brown, a research associate in psychology and co-author of the study with associate professor Todd Braver.

Experiments that coupled computerized modeling to predict brain function with neuroimaging studies done while volunteers responded to cues on a computer screen demonstrated that the anterior cingulate cortex (ACC) not only helps us sort through difficult decisions, but actually learns to predict bad consequences.

"In the past, we found activity in the ACC when people had to make a difficult decision among mutually exclusive options, or after they made a mistake," Brown said. Some scientists describe it as the

"oops center" because the area near the top of the frontal lobes of the brain is literally the center of that irritated, sinking feeling we get when we realize we've made the wrong turn or clicked the wrong button on a control panel.

The region has long been known to be a part of the brain's executive control system, helping to mediate between fact-based reasoning and primal emotional responses to love, fear and anticipation.

Brown said the study sought to show that the brain region doesn't just respond to detection of a mistake, but instead detects the likelihood that a person is on the verge of making a mistake.

When the researchers monitored volunteers' responses to color cues on a computer screen, they found that the "oops center" had indeed learned the significance of a cue that would help prevent the person from making an error, allowing the person to adjust behavior in time to avoid making the mistake.

Abnormalities in the brain region are associated with a number of serious mental disorders, including schizophrenia and obsessive-compulsive disorder, and the study offers new insights into those conditions as well as possible new approaches to treatment.

"Our results suggest how impairment of the ACC mechanisms in schizophrenia can lead to breakdowns in the early warning system," Brown said.

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on Page 23**

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Inmates study in a classroom at the Challenge Incarceration Program at Willow River, Minn., on Feb. 4. For a select group of nonviolent offenders, the camp is a chance to shave years off their prison sentences, by toughing out six months of military training and drug treatment.

State swaps prison time for boot camp

BY MARTIGA LOHN

The Associated Press

WILLOW RIVER, Minn. — When Timothy Ruzek ended his prison for selling methamphetamine, he was desperate for any way out — even if it meant the buzz cut, barked orders and daybreak runs of a military-style boot camp.

For Ruzek, making it through the six-month camp will shave his 6 1/2-year sentence in half. For the state of Minnesota, the money saved in prison costs has lawmakers looking hard at adding more boot camp beds — especially as meth convictions explode.

The idea comes at a time when boot camps appear to be fading in popularity across the nation. The federal government is phasing them out after studies have shown they don't consistently reduce repeat crime.

But Minnesota officials see savings in the earlier release of boot camp graduates. It costs about the same — \$78 per day, per inmate — for the boot camp or incarceration.

"We save a pile of bed days here," Deputy Corrections Commissioner Dennis Benson said while giving state legislators a tour of the camp, about two hours north of the Twin Cities.

With 168 prisoners on a waiting list for the camp, corrections officials want \$380,000 to add at least 24 beds.

"I like the fact that if they participate [in camp] their sentence is knocked down," said Julie Rosen, a Republican state senator who supports the expansion. "It's going to cost us less."

An expanded boot camp is

among the options Minnesota is considering in its war against methamphetamine, the cheaply made drug that's become a growing problem nationwide.

Other options include stiffer sentences, adding more state agents and finding better ways to treat addiction.

Allison Colker, a senior policy specialist with the National Conference of State Legislatures, said she wasn't aware of any other state launching boot camp programs specifically for meth offenders.

Minnesota's camp was set up for meth offenders when it opened more than 12 years ago, but in the last four years, the number of state prisoners doing time for meth has ballooned from 139 to more than 1,000.

"I came here solely because it was going to cut my sentence short," said Ruzek, 39. "I didn't really

associate it with changing my life as much as doing hard labor to get out of prison early."

But the discipline and treatment Ruzek found in the camp had unexpected effects. Inmates are required to attend group chemical dependency sessions to talk about their addictions — mostly to meth, but crack and cocaine as well. Ruzek is now hopeful he can kick a meth habit he started almost 15 years ago.

For prisoners, the stakes are high. If they fail any part of the program or a year of post-release supervision, they go back to prison without credit for time in the program. Fewer than half of the nearly 2,000 inmates have made it through the end.

Of those who do finish, history suggests 8 percent will return to prison and 2 percent will be convicted of new crimes.

Java costs in jail

MI LANSING — Inmates in Michigan's prisons will have to pay for their own caffeine fix next month.

In an effort to save \$250,000 this year, state officials are cutting off the supply of free coffee to inmates at state prisons and people in boot camps and correctional centers.

Corrections Department spokesman Russ Marlan said inmates can still buy instant coffee at prison stores, but he didn't know how much they charge. The cost-saving effort begins after March 1.

"We're looking at everything that can reduce costs without jeopardizing public safety," Marlan said Monday. "There is no nutritional value to coffee."

Coach's suicide warning

CO DENVER — A girls basketball coach apparently told family members just hours before his jailhouse suicide that he was planning to harm himself, but corrections staff never were alerted.

In a letter sent to the Douglas County Sheriff's Office, District Attorney Carol Chambers said family members presumably didn't think coach Rick Lopez would follow through on his threats.

Lopez was being held on 55 felony counts of sexually assaulting three of his female basketball players, two of whom allege they were younger than 15 when they first had intimate relations with the coach.

Grounded for ventilator

FL ST. PETERSBURG — The trip began like perhaps 20 others that Barrett said he had flown on US Airways.

Barrett and his nurse checked in three hours early at Tampa International Airport. A quadriplegic, Barrett told ticket agents he was traveling with a ventilator, he says, and they put a sticker on his shirt to make sure he was seated ahead of the crowd.

But before his flight left the gate Saturday, airline personnel said Barrett had to be carried off the plane. The airline decided that because his ventilator was a life-support device, it was too risky for him to fly.

This week, Florida Attorney General Charlie Crist wrote US Airways chief executive Bruce Lakefield that federal law bans airlines from refusing to transport people with disabilities. The airline said employees followed procedures developed to comply with the Air Carrier Access Act.

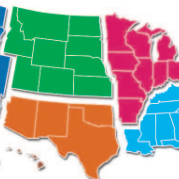
Barrett was on his way to Cleveland for surgery to help him breathe on his own.

Grisly death

MN ST. PAUL, Minn. — A man accused of killing his long-time girlfriend with a claw hammer during an argument in their apartment was charged with intentional second-degree murder.

Clarence J. Dunn Sr., 49, called 911 Tuesday morning and reported that he had killed 42-year-old Cassandra Jane Koochek by hitting her in the head with a hammer, according to a criminal complaint.

Police who responded to the woman's apartment found Koochek lying on a bed with a blanket and pillow over her head. A



AMERICAN ROUNDUP

plastic bag also had been placed over her head.

Dunn was arrested and taken to a hospital where he was treated for self-inflicted cuts to his wrists.

Guilty of eye gouging

CA A jury has convicted a San Francisco man of aggravated mayhem, torture and assault for gouging out his girlfriend's left eye.

The case gained notoriety when a police officer was killed in a car crash while trying to catch the defendant, Monte Hane, 32.

A jury found Hane guilty of beating Margie Holmes with a radio and a video recorder, then hacking at her back and thigh with a cleaver before ripping her eye from its socket on June 11, 2002.

Hane's defense was that he could not remember the incident because he had been on a drug binge.

Yale women's march

CT NEW HAVEN — More than 100 Yale University graduate students marched to the president's office Thursday to protest what they said is inequitable treatment of women at the Ivy League university.

The students, many of whom are trying to form a union, claim that women are discouraged from getting top tenured positions. They want Yale to release the names of job candidates to help show whether the university is considering women fairly.

The protesters also criticized President Richard Levin for not joining the presidents of Stanford, Princeton and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in denounc-



Squirrely situation

Two dogs stalk a squirrel along a street in Great Falls, Mont.

ing comments made last month by Harvard President Larry Summers. Summers said biological differences may help explain why more men than women excel in science, but has since apologized several times.

Weight bill dropped

GA ATLANTA — A Georgia lawmaker who sponsored a bill that would have required public schools to weigh students and list their body mass indices on their report cards says she's dropping the idea.

Rep. Stephanie Stuckey Benfield, D-Atlanta, said calls and e-mails to her office were running heavily against the proposal.

Benfield said she still hopes to do something to help with childhood obesity, "but not with this bill."

Among other things, critics said the bill would harm students' self-esteem. "That was certainly never my intent, but I'm sensitive to that," Benfield said.

Samurai sword slashing

TX ARLINGTON — A 16-year-old who slashed a classmate in the face with a samurai sword had been on campus more than an hour searching for several other students, police said.

A Lamar High School office worker noticed the freshman walking into the school about 6:50 a.m. Monday carrying an 18-inch sword in each hand. She called security guards on a radio and then dialed 911.

Shortly after the assault in a hallway, school security guards tackled the teen. Police arrived about a minute after the 911 call, according to police records.

The 14-year-old victim, whose name was not released, was treated at a hospital for a 2½-inch cut on his chin, police said. The suspect, whose name was not released, is being held on suspicion of attempted murder at Tarrant County's juvenile detention center. Police said they don't know a motive. The teen refused to talk with detectives after he appeared before a judge Monday morning.

Protester suit thrown out

NH CONCORD — A federal judge has thrown out the case of a Bedford man who was threatened with arrest when he dressed as a terrorist outside a polling place last fall.

On Election Day, Joseph Galibolis showed up at the polls wearing a black ski mask and olive-green ammunition holders and carrying a plastic squirt gun resembling an assault rifle and a John Kerry campaign sign.

By dressing as a terrorist campaigning for Kerry, Galibolis hoped to convince voters that President Bush's anti-terrorism policies were superior to the Democrats' proposals.

After several hours, police asked him to leave or face arrest, saying he was alarming voters and causing traffic problems.

Galibolis later sued Nashua police Sgt. John Fisher for violating his free-speech rights by ending his protest. His lawsuit sought \$1 per week until the 2008 presidential election.

Galibolis then sued in federal court, where a judge threw out the case Tuesday for jurisdictional reasons.



Big group hug

Spc. Edward Chadburn hugs his kids upon his return to family and friends in Salt Lake City. The 116th Engineering unit spent the last year serving in Iraq.



Fishy activity

Tery Price fishes for perch along the banks of Bayou Petit outside Houma, La.



Easily entertained

Kody Priesgen, 8, concentrates as he tries to hit snow chunks with a stick while playing outside after school in Mayville, WI.



High-flying ride

Jimmy Larson, a member of the Ansoil Snowmobile Racing team, takes a jump on a practice track in Aurora, Minn.



Ferocious history

Carl Jara, an exhibit artisan/technician at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, puts the finishing touches around the velociraptor display.



Pit stop

A flock of Canada geese rest at the Mabaska Wildlife Area west of Ames, near Boone county, Iowa.

Holy cheese?!

CA SAN FRANCISCO — The possibly miraculous grilled-cheese sandwich arrived in San Francisco this week, accompanied by bodyguards.

It will only be in the city through the weekend, the sandwich has prior commitments and cannot stay long.

"We're excited to have it," said Ian Ilias, manager of the Ripley's Believe It or Not Museum, which is hosting the sandwich during its visit.

The sandwich is said to bear the image of the Virgin Mary in its grill marks. It was cooked 10 years ago by a Florida woman, who sold it in November to an Internet casino for \$28,000. The casino took the sandwich on a nationwide tour, out of the goodness of its heart.

"People need to find spirituality these days," said Eric Amgar, the sandwich's advance man. "There's nothing wrong with helping them to do that."

Cop becomes suspect

MINN ST. PAUL — A Minneapolis police officer was jailed this week on suspicion of kidnapping and raping a woman he met at a health club while he was off duty.

David M. Hansen, 28, was arrested Wednesday evening at his home in St. Paul and is being held without bail.

Minneapolis Police Chief Bill McManus placed Hansen, who has been on the force about two years, on paid administrative leave once he learned of the allegations.

Mayo Clinic donation

AZ SCOTTSDALE — A local man whose wife died of cancer donated \$5 million to the Mayo Clinic to establish an endowment for research on the disease.

Officials said the gift from Mark Mazzarino, 89, was the largest ever earmarked for research at Mayo Clinic Scottsdale. The former oil company owner's wife, Shirley, died of cancer 45 years ago.

Laser-related arrest

WA LAKEWOOD — King County deputies arrested a 25-year-old man for allegedly shining a laser on jetliners arriving or leaving Seattle-Tacoma International Airport.

The intense light caused no injury or damage. The man, who wasn't named pending possible indictment, could face nine felony charges, officials said.

The FBI and Federal Aviation Administration participated in the investigation.

Gambino phone bust

NY NEW YORK — Six reputed members of the Gambino crime family pleaded guilty to ringing up more than \$650 million in unauthorized charges on telephone customers' credit cards and phone bills.

The six, led by alleged Gambino captain Salvatore Locascio, pleaded guilty Monday before their trial was to begin on charges including money laundering and conspiracy to commit mail fraud.

They face sentences ranging from less than two years to 10 years in prison and they have agreed to forfeit millions of dollars

in proceeds from the scheme.

Women awarded \$1M

FL WEST PALM BEACH — Two women who were secretly videotaped under their desks at work were awarded \$1 million each in a lawsuit against their former employer.

A jury found Tuesday that Patti Kidder and Katherine Dean suffered emotional trauma when Ocean Financial Corp. managers and co-workers teased them about the video footage.

The women claimed they were harassed after a co-worker admitted in 1999 that he put a camera under their desks and sold the video to pornographic Web sites. Kidder said she was called "Patti porn star" and propositioned by a manager.

Man survives crash

CO MONTROSE — A man survived the crash of a single-engine plane, then spent more than 24 hours stranded in rugged terrain before rescuers found him.

The pilot wasn't injured when the single-engine Cessna 172 crashed Wednesday afternoon in powdery snow that was about 8 feet deep, said Civil Air Patrol volunteer Mark Young, who is also the Montrose County coroner.

The 58-year-old man, who was the only person onboard, survived freezing temperatures at the 10,000-foot altitude by digging a snow cave. He was hungry and dehydrated when rescuers found him Thursday evening.

Coyote attacks woman

MA BARNSTABLE — A Cape Cod woman who was bitten on her left hand is believed to be the first person ever attacked by a rabid coyote in Massachusetts, according to state wildlife officials.

Cindy Parker-Kelley was attacked by a 45-pound female coyote in her back yard Thursday when she went to check on her Norwegian elkhound, Dakota. Her husband, David Kelley, beat the coyote with a piece of lumber, and police later killed it.

The state's only other recorded attack on a human by a coyote also occurred on Cape Cod. A coyote snatched a 3-year-old child from a swing set in Sandwich in 1998, but his mother intervened and the boy was not badly injured. It's unknown if that coyote had rabies.

Animal abuser sentenced

VA MANASSAS — A woman convicted of animal cruelty after an emaciated pit bull was discovered eating the carcass of another dog in her backyard was sentenced Monday to two days in jail.

Karen Lee Morris, 37, also was barred from ever possessing another companion animal in Virginia as part of a related civil case.

City officials had sought a 10-day jail sentence.

Animal control officers found three pit bulls in the tiny backyard of Morris' townhouse in December, while she was away on a family trip. They saw a thin pit bull cannibalizing the carcass of another pit bull.

Judge Craig Johnston said the sentence was "the only way I can ensure that this doesn't happen again."

Stories and photos from wire services

OPINION

What newspapers are saying at home

The following editorial excerpts are selected from a cross section of newspapers throughout the United States. The editorials are provided by The Associated Press and other statewide syndicates.

FDA pick has tools to help San Jose (Calif.) Mercury News

President Bush proved Monday that he doesn't cater to the pharmaceutical industry's every whim.

The president has been under pressure to pick someone with close ties to the industry as the new commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration. His choice of acting commissioner Lester Crawford, who has extensive experience in food safety issues, deserves bipartisan support and quick confirmation by the Senate.

Critics will pounce on Crawford's performance since taking over as acting commissioner in March 2004. They will argue that his selection is less than inspiring, particularly in the area of controlling prescription drug costs.

His very status as acting commissioner hampered his ability to show strong leadership at an agency he acknowledges is in need of an overhaul. The FDA, which has a \$1.8 billion budget and a staff of more than 10,000, has gone without a permanent commissioner for more than half of Bush's presidency. Crawford is well-suited to bring necessary reforms to the FDA in four major areas:

- protecting the U.S. food supply from terrorism;
- ramping up the nation's vaccination programs, particularly in regard to flu outbreaks and bioterrorism threats;
- strengthening the process of monitoring safety of drugs already on the market, including consideration of an independent drug safety center; and
- resolving the issue of re-importing prescription drugs from outside the United States.

Crawford's four years at the FDA provide him with ample knowledge of the agency's inner workings. Besides his background as a veterinarian and pharmacologist, Crawford brings expertise in food safety from his experience as administrator of Virginia Tech's Center for Food and Nutrition Policy. He is a good choice to enforce the FDA's role as the nation's foremost consumer protection agency.

Voluntary HIV testing is smart Rochester (N.Y.) Democrat and Chronicle

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that nearly 300,000 Americans are HIV-positive and don't know it.

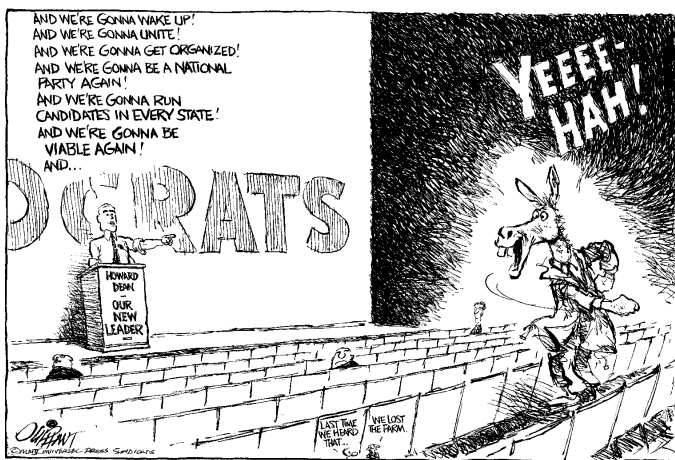
Results from two federally funded studies suggest that routine, voluntary HIV testing could lead to fewer infections and better treatment. The idea deserves the serious consideration the CDC is giving it.

Nearly 40 percent of people with HIV in the United States don't learn they have the disease until their immune systems are so badly damaged they become sick. At that point, effective treatment is often compromised. And a person who spends a long period unaware of an HIV infection is more likely to spread it.

Most voluntary HIV tests part of the medical culture, like cancer screenings or cholesterol tests, would cut down on the number of infections spread by people who don't know their HIV status.

Getting primary care doctors to offer and encourage HIV tests would be especially helpful for populations at especially high risk, such as African American women, who make up 65 percent of new female HIV infections in America.

Knowing one's HIV status should be the norm. CDC-recommended testing for those at risk could help slow the spread of this disease.



Compromise good for Iraq The Sacramento (Calif.) Bee

Whatever else it may mean, the final tally of votes in Iraq's Jan. 30 election for a provisional national assembly carries a hopeful message: No single party is likely to dominate Iraqi politics for the foreseeable future. Thus forming a government and writing a constitution will require compromise, a fundamental tenet of democracy.

Despite its first-place finish, with 48 percent of the popular vote and 140 of the 275 seats in the assembly, the United Iraqi Alliance, dominated by two Shiite religious parties, will not have a large enough majority to dictate either the shape of the government or the content of the constitution, both of which require a two-thirds majority. That diminishes the likelihood that the most rigid elements of Islamic law will be embedded in the country's basic charter.

That doesn't mean the road ahead will be smooth.

What might help, in Iraq and elsewhere, is a more active role by European governments that opposed the Iraq war — Germany and France especially and, perhaps even more important, by the Arab world. Autocratic regimes there have taken no meaningful steps toward popular sovereignty, notwithstanding the lip service they have paid to free elections in trying to realize the promise that lies before them.

Dean there to set the stage Herald News, West Paterson, N.J.

Before the Iowa caucuses, presidential hopeful Howard Dean was the most popular Vermontian since Ben and Jerry. Like ice cream, Dean didn't hold up to intense heat. The former governor let out a war whoop during his concession speech in Iowa, and the media destroyed him. Rumors of Dean's political death were greatly exaggerated. Last weekend, he was elected chairman of the Democratic National Committee. ...

The party chairman is not really the frontman for the party; the 2008 presidential nominee will fill that role. In the interim, Democrats need to build up local party machinery. They need someone who understands grass-roots organizations. They need someone who is willing to step back and let the candidates take center stage. Dean may be better suited for that role

than Republicans think. Dean's first test will be gubernatorial races in New Jersey and Virginia in November.

To win back Congress and the White House, Democrats need a message that appeals to moderate, and even some conservative, voters. If successful, Democrats will have something to cheer. Dean would be advised this time around to keep his enthusiasm in check.

Wrong to put Kyoto on shelf The Daytona Beach (Fla.) News-Journal

Glaciers are retreating in mountains from Alaska to the Andes to Tibet. An age-old Antarctic ice shelf the size of Rhode Island shatters and melts into the sea. Greenland's ice, which holds enough water to raise ocean levels 21 feet, is starting to melt. ...

Yet James Inhofe, the Oklahoma senator and chairman of an environmental committee, calls global warming the "greatest hoax ever perpetrated on the American people."

Inhofe's thinking is echoed more mildly by the White House and is winning the day in the United States for now, at least politically. On Wednesday, the Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change went into effect, but without American participation. It isn't just a failure of diplomacy characteristic of the Bush administration, which has been either unwilling to negotiate through international forums or inept at doing so. It is a failure of imagination as well. The administration's promised alternative to Kyoto has yet to coalesce in the form of policy. ...

The United States contributes more than a quarter of the world's pollution (and greenhouse gases). Its absence from the treaty means progress on emissions will be even slower, if at all effective.

Border between law and order The San Diego Union-Tribune

Suppose that, whenever the federal government wanted to build a major project ... it simply exempted itself from the labyrinth of environmental laws that applied to everyone else. Why have such laws in the first place, if Washington is going to sweep them aside for its own convenience while enforcing them rigorously against all other parties?

This question is more than academic

now that the House has voted to waive all state and federal environmental laws in order to speed completion of the proposed triple-fence barrier at the [U.S.-Mexican] border [south of San Diego]. In our view, such a blanket exemption is not only unnecessary but also hypocritical. Worse, it would establish a terrible precedent, undermining the fundamental idea that no one, least of all the federal government, is above the law. ...

The Senate should stand firm against the sweeping House waiver.

A victory for the status quo The Toledo, Ohio Blade

House Republican leaders in Washington have delivered an unmistakable message to Capitol Hill: Don't bother to lodge ethics complaints, no matter how offensive the conduct of corruption.

They did so by firing the chairman of the ethics committee, replacing him with a more pliable associate, and adding to the panel two members who have made no secret of their support for at least one major ethics scofflaw. Majority Leader Tom DeLay of Texas.

The action makes it less likely that House members will take the time to complain about the kind of incipient corruption that goes on daily in and about the halls of Congress. In a process that already was difficult to negotiate, the deck is further stacked against them.

Visa rules reach happy medium The Orlando (Fla.) Sentinel

Uncle Sam made a smart move in easing visa rules for many foreign students and scientists.

Under rules adopted in 1998, students and scientists in fields considered sensitive had to renew their visas every year. But tighter security after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks lengthened the average wait for renewals to more than two months. The delays have led some foreign students and scientists to take their talents to America's economic competitors.

Now the State Department will give students up to four years, and scientists up to two, between visa renewals. Homeland Security officials have blessed the change.

As long as it can be done without compromising national security, it will always be in America's best interest to attract the best and brightest from around the world.

YOUR MONEY



Tresia Eaves was hired as a Sentel Corporation project manager. As a former Air Force captain with 13 years of software development experience, she offered Sentel technical and management skills, as well as experience dealing with bureaucracy.

Special skills give applicants a leg up on jobs

BY JANE HILL

The Dallas Morning News

Client investment bank seeks hands-on developer. Must have five to 10 years technical experience, experience working in Microsoft development environment, excellent communication skills, financial knowledge a plus. Treasury business knowledge desirable.

When ads appear on job boards, thousands of resumes highlighting the required technical skills land on the desk of the hiring manager.

But any developer who also has specialized industry knowledge will surely rise to the top of the pile.

Paul Rector, recruiting director at NewData Strategies, said specialized knowledge is desirable in health care, banking and shipping and distribution. Hiring managers in those industries often request information technology candidates who can demonstrate that they understand the business.

"Managers need someone who has been through the hoops because it greatly reduces the learning curve," he said.

Most applicants who have the required technical skills could adequately handle the work while picking up the vocabulary particular to the industry or business fundamentals on the job, he said. The hiring manager, though, "doesn't have the luxury of time."

Dan Ortmann developed his specialization in technology support working on the trading floors in lower Manhattan for Goldman Sachs Group Inc. After 16 years with the investment company and

two cross-country relocations, his job was eliminated two years ago. He lost his job but not his enthusiasm for the industry.

"I've got an affinity for it," he said.

Now a consultant on a long-term contract in Dallas, Ortmann said his understanding of the industry probably helped him land his dream job as a technology manager for one of Goldman Sachs' biggest competitors.

In an employee's market, industry specialization may not matter, Ortmann said.

"But in an employer's market, employers can ask for 12 out of 10 requirements and they can get it. In days gone by, if you had seven out of 10, you were hired."

Tresia Eaves manages 24 software developers who speak the language of deductions and exemptions. They update the software that Internal Revenue Service agents rely upon in the field. As division director for Sentel Corp., a contractor for the IRS, she manages the project, including software deployment.

Eaves was hired not for her tax expertise but because she knows how government agencies work.

As a former Air Force captain with 13 years of software development experience, she offered Sentel her technical and management skills combined with experience dealing with bureaucracy. Appreciating what IRS field agents do is particularly helpful in meetings, Eaves said.

"There's a feeling of comfort you give the customer when you use their vocabulary and can talk about the goals of the organization," she said.

Two Internet music stores with two different pitches

Napster builds library; iTunes sells the songs

BY JOHN M. MORAN

The Hartford (R.I.) Courant

While the recent Super Bowl was under way, two hard-nosed opponents were squaring off in high-profile commercials targeting roughly the same audience.

On one side was Apple's iTunes digital music service, far and away the most popular place to buy songs over the Internet. Pay 99 cents for a song and then download it to your personal computer or iPod portable music device.

As it did last year, Apple is promoting iTunes by teaming up with Pepsi to give away thousands of free songs. Redeemable "coupons" are found beneath some Pepsi bottle caps. (You may remember the commercial showing people listening to music coming from inside their soda bottles.) Yet as the Super Bowl TV commercials also showed, iTunes is facing upstart competition from a reborn Napster, which is now a digital music service of its own. What makes the contest between iTunes and Napster truly fascinating isn't the commercials, but rather the different approaches to selling music online that they represent.

The model pursued by Apple's iTunes is familiar enough. You pay to download a song and, within certain limits on copying, you own it.

It's the online equivalent of buying a music CD at the mall. And thanks to Apple's runaway hit, the iPod portable music player,

you can easily carry those songs around with you wherever you go.

But Napster takes a radically different approach that essentially says: Why buy a little music when you can rent much more of it instead? Consider that it costs about \$15 for 15 iTunes downloads. But that same \$15 would buy a month's worth of unlimited access to Napster's giant music collection. In short, for the cost of a single audio CD, Napster gives you access to thousands.

But unlike iTunes, you can't burn these songs to a CD, and they will play only as long as your Napster subscription remains active.



Samsung's Napster-branded player and the "Napster To Go" service offer digital music lovers the same kind of portability that has made the iPod a household word.

And with its "Napster To Go" service, Napster has managed to offer digital music lovers the same kind of portability that has made the iPod a household word.

The question now is whether consumers are ready to shift their way of thinking about how music is acquired and used.

The iTunes approach has more or less been around since grandpa fired up the old 78 rpm record player. You pay for the music and it's yours forever. People know that approach and, judging by historical music sales figures, they're comfortable with it.

But the vision promoted by Napster argues that if you really love music, you're better off leasing it. And there's some pretty compelling logic to support that view.

Figure it this way: Even if you

buy a new CD every month, in five years you will still only have a modest collection of 60 CDs. That's hardly enough to satisfy even casual listeners, much less hard-core music lovers.

For that same expenditure, Napster says, you could have one of the biggest music collections in the world. Thousands of titles by hundreds of artists, all just a mouse-click away.

Such a collection would cost tens of thousands of dollars to buy, putting it out of the reach of all but the most dedicated — and richest — music fans. At \$15 a month, it's affordable by almost anyone.

The buy-vs.-rent calculation only leans in favor of people who listen to a lot of different music. After all, if you're satisfied hearing the same handful of songs played over and over, month after month, you probably should just buy them and be done with it.

But music fanatics, families with diverse and changing musical tastes, and even people who just want a hassle-free variety might decide that renting music beats owning it after all.

The question now is whether consumers are ready to shift their way of thinking about how music is acquired and used.

Sunday Horoscope

The moon is void of course, making it a lovely time for loafing. Everyone has the voice of a Type A personality somewhere deep inside that will protest the idea of easing chips and watching the television as if it were in danger of being stolen away at any second. But sometimes giving the id what it wants is the fastest way back to productivity.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY

(February 20). The ideas you come up with this year could make you rich. Value yourself and your brainchildren, and the world finds value in you. Romance has a giddy quality all spring. Singles have fun flirting with the possibilities for settling down. Summer features education. The more you learn, the more you earn. Love signs are Sagittarius and Cancer.

ARIES (March 21-April 19)

Are you an innocent, an urchin on an adventure, face to face with a looming choice. Do you dare to open Door No. 37? You have no idea what you'll encounter. The only way to find out is to turn the handle.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

When you're searching for a hide-out, it's a sign that there's something you need to confront. Instead of weighing the options and thinking about how to play a situation, trust yourself enough to jump in. You'll be fine.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21)

The temporal nature of this life is profound in your mind. As the Five for Fighting song says, "I'm 33 for a moment," or 15 or 99. Have the courage to embody your "moment."

CANCER (June 22-July 22)

Put on some skates, jump on the trampoline, or plan a trip to the amusement park. Doing something to recapture your youth fills you with joy, health and hope. Sagittarius and Gemini make the best partners in fun.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

Daily rituals are important to your sense of well-being. A balanced life depends on actions you can comfort-

ably repeat. It's probably up to you to preserve the dignity of a tradition, like no cell phones at the family dinner table.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

You want it bad now, so don't try — do. As far as that possibility goes, you'd be surprised at what is really possible when excuses are no longer an option. Even an ironclad decision can be reversed.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23)

You're strong now and will remain so if you make a point to shun all ploy and sympathy, especially the kind you give yourself. A change in your appearance will bring favorable results. Risk it.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21)

When you know what you want (like you do today), almost any path leads to it. Make inquiries. Doors swing open wide. Get out and circulate. You bring lucky people into your life and renew old contacts.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

With a peek into someone else's life, you expand your view of your own. You're looking for definable, moral guidelines but will likely discover there's more gray area than you ever imagined. This should be freeing.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

Cancer. Trade to disagree. The odd move is "not" — it's the only move more "in." You could be privy to special information or invited into an exclusive situation because you're no different from the rest.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

When people come together for a high-minded cause, it's nothing to take for granted. You'll act in a way to protect the integrity of a group by making sure that all parties are present and accountable.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

New information you get today is like the lightning that lit Ben Franklin's kite. Sure, it's shocking, but it could also be turned into something hugely meaningful and useful. Think it over.

Creators Syndicate

'Big Easy' once a book title

What is the source of the nickname "the Big Easy" for New Orleans?

New Orleans, like many other distinctive cities, has a good handful of nicknames. But none is as well known as "the Big Easy."

According to our research, it first showed up in 1970 as the title of a novel about New Orleans by James Conaway.

The 1970 book was made into a popular movie in 1986, and from that point the term became much more widely used.

Conaway is often credited

with inventing the famous name himself, although one of our citations from a 1988 article in Harper's Magazine suggests otherwise: "Liebling was conjuring up the city before 1960 (....) It was a poor, peculiar, happy place, (...). Only local black people and a handful of hipsters knew to call it the Big Easy." As it stands, however, we have no written evidence of "the Big Easy" prior to Conaway's 1970 novel.

This column was prepared by the editors of Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Tenth Edition. Readers may send questions to Merriam-Webster's Online, P.O. Box 261, 47 Federal St., Springfield, Mass. 01102.

Woman cannot force fiancé's parents to love her, daughter

safely address them to you.

Dear Abby: I'm a successful, 25-year-old professional woman, in an amazing relationship with a man I'll call "Riley." We plan to be married in June.

The worm in the apple is this: His parents are not happy with the fact that I have an 8-year-old daughter, "Kyra." I was raped at 16 and chose to keep my baby.

Riley loves Kyra, and vice versa. But Riley's parents can't accept Kyra and me. It hurts my daughter not to be accepted, just as it hurts me. Riley has talked to his parents about the situation, but they are stubborn. How can I get his parents to love us as their son has?

— **Hurt in the Midwest**
Dear Hurt: You could claim for your love from now until the cows come home, but you can't instill love in someone's heart if it isn't there to begin with. And if you were by some miracle able to achieve it, it could take years.

Even if Riley managed that his mother and father treat you and your daughter with kindness and respect, there is no guarantee they would comply. Please take this into consideration before proceeding with your wedding plans.

Dear Abby



Dear Abby: I am the mother of a 9-year-old daughter, "Bianca," who lives with her father. While Bianca was visiting me last summer, she noticed that she was "changing" physically. I took it upon myself to talk with my daughter about her changes and all of the things that come with going through puberty, including getting her monthly cycle.

Bianca came back to visit at Christmas and informed me that her father and stepmother have told her that she is too young to talk about her cycle. I want to confront them about this, but how do I do it without being offensive? Bianca's father is very controlling and has a temper, and the smallest statement always leads to chaos. I am worried that my daughter may be punished because she told me what they said to her.

— **Worried in the Southwest**
Dear Worried: You did the right thing in talking to your daughter. Your ex-husband and his wife appear to be ignorant of the fact that girls are maturing at younger and younger ages, and need to know what to expect as their bodies develop. Rather than "confronting" them, make it clear to Bianca that if she has any questions, she can always

No harm in son's fiancée calling her future in-laws Mom and dad

Dear Annie: We have two children — "Jan," our 34-year-old married daughter, and "Ben," age 38, who is engaged to "Iris."

Iris is a wonderful person, and we are so excited that our son finally has found someone to settle down with. The problem is that Iris calls us "Mom and Dad," and our daughter does not like this.

She believes Iris is not entitled to call us by those titles because she is not family. Jan says Iris is being disrespectful.

Jan becomes enraged whenever we are together and she hears Iris refer to us as Mom and Dad. After one of those visits, Jan is on the phone the next day, ranting and raving about Iris. Ben thinks his sister is jealous and spoiled.

My husband and I are very flattered that our future daughter-in-law feels comfortable enough to call us "Mom and Dad," and we don't mind it one bit. In fact, we actually like it, but we worry that you are not being supportive of Jan if we let it continue.

This past holiday season was a

nightmare because of Jan's sensitivity, and we don't know how to handle this without hurting anyone's feelings. My sister thinks if we side with Jan, we will alienate Iris and possibly Ben, without really helping our daughter. So says Jan needs to grow up.

Any suggestions? We really need your advice.

Annie's Mailbox



A Son-to-Be Mom-in-Law

Dear Mom: I want to agree with your sister. Jan sounds jealous and insecure, and you need to make it quite clear that she does not get to set the rules in your relationships. She may not like it, but being "supportive" does not mean caving in.

Since you like being called "Mom and Dad," and Iris is eager to do it, let her. She soon will be a member of the family and should be treated as a daughter. This will undoubtedly make Jan uneasy. She's been queen of the roost for 34 years. But try to reassure her of your love and convince her that she's not losing a brother, she is gaining a sister — and someone who could turn out to be a best friend as well, if she will allow it.

Dear Annie: I am a very nervous passenger when I travel in an automobile, and I do not like to drive. My husband is a very good driver and has not had an accident. However, that does not make it any easier for me.

As I get older, it is getting worse. I am apprehensive from the time we get out of the driveway until we return home. My husband has adjusted his driving to make me more comfortable, but it makes no difference. Listening to music over headphones doesn't help, and reading makes me carsick. I'd rather not take anything to make me sleep the entire time. Any suggestions?

— Doomed to Stay in the House

Dear Doomed: It sounds as if you have an anxiety disorder, and without treatment, you could get worse. Treatment involves therapy, medication (that won't knock you out), or a combination of the two. For information, contact Anxiety Disorders Association of America (www.adaa.org), 8730 Georgia Avenue, Suite 600, Silver Spring, Md., 20910.

Annie's Mailbox is written by Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar, longtime editors of the *Dear Abby* columns. Please e-mail your questions to annie@mailbox.comcast.net, or write to: Annie's Mailbox, c/o Creators Syndicate, 5777 W. Century Blvd., Suite 700, Los Angeles, Ca 90048.

Creators Syndicate

White House search for new cooking whiz starts

Old chef reportedly clashed with first lady

BY DARLENE SUPERVILLE

The Associated Press

A vocado and heirloom tomato salad beneath a spicy, toasted cumin dressing. Tiny bay scallops, lightly caramelized, folded into a risotto and served with lobster sauce. A chef who can pull this off just might have a future in the White House kitchen.

The search is on for a White House chef who can do it all, from simple munchies for the president to elaborate state dinners.

After nearly 11 years of cooking for two presidents, chef Walter Scheib III has left the kitchen at America's most famous house to pursue new opportunities.

The White House needs a flexible kitchen wizard capable of whipping up everything from a simple sandwich — President Bush is partial to peanut butter and jelly — to fancy menus that titillate the taste buds of the dozens who attend its glamorous receptions and state dinners, say those in the know.

Other likely ingredients for the new head cook: a thorough knowledge of American cuisine and international tastes, and a personality that can stand the pressure cooker.

Sara Moulton, executive chef at Gourmet magazine and host of "Sara's Secrets" on the Food Network, said the job is an "awesome responsibility" and, for the new chef, the "single

most important thing is that you be completely adaptable and completely versatile."

He (there's never been a "she" White House chef), after all, has many palates to please — from the president and first lady, sometimes with differing food tastes, to their children, and guests including bureaucrats, friends, lawmakers and foreign dignitaries.

Besides preparing mouthwatering meals, the chef should have a good personality, be good with people and budgets, and be versed in international cuisine, said Letitia Baldridge, who was social secretary in the Kennedy White House.

Edward Leonard, president of the American Culinary Federation, a professional organization for U.S. chefs, said: "Being a good cook is part of it, but without those other skills I think they would fail."

Hillary Rodham Clinton hired Scheib, a California native and graduate of the prestigious Culinary Institute of America, in April 1994 because she wanted to feature American cuisine after years of French cooking at 1600 Pennsylvania Ave., ushered in by Jacqueline Kennedy.

"Walter made it decidedly American," said Tim Ryan, president of the culinary institute, of White House cuisine under Scheib.

Scheib, who did not return a telephone message seeking comment, has spoken publicly of the difficulty he had trying to satisfy the tastes of first lady Laura Bush.

White House chef usher Gary Walters is



Outgoing White House chef Walter Scheib III greets chefs from around the world at the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum in St. Michaels, Md., on July 27. After nearly 11 years of cooking for two presidents, Scheib has packed up the Cuisinart and left the kitchen at America's most famous house to pursue new opportunities.

leading the search for someone to fill Scheib's toke, the traditional chef's hat.

"The White House is being lobbied as it's never been lobbied before on any bill," Baldridge supposed.

Scheib's departure is the latest in a recent flurry of staff changes by the first lady.

Mrs. Bush hired a new pastry chef to replace the acclaimed Roland Mesnier, who retired last year after 25 years of dessert-making for five presidents. She replaced her chief of staff, the previous one had served her for 10 years, and hired a new social secretary, the wife of a major Bush fund-raiser.

Unlike Mrs. Kennedy, Baldridge said, Mrs. Bush won't be at a loss to find a good chef because of the many fine restaurants and hotels around the country, where previous White House chefs came from.

"When we were looking for a chef there were very few places to look," Baldridge said. "She will be confronted with an embarrassment of riches."

While being executive chef at the White House has its share of prestige, the job also carries a fair amount of drudgery. A steady stream of guests, as many as 2,000 per month, are fed there, and Mrs. Bush has signaled her intent to do more entertaining than in the first term.

Experts say 'hot plants' can boost a weak libido

By BROOKE ADAMS

Salt Lake Tribune

Let's talk sex.

Long before the little blue pill, there was maca.

And Horny Goat Weed, catubaba and ashwagandha — plant aphrodisiacs that people in far-flung parts of the world have used for hundreds of years in the belief such substances improved their sex lives.

In tea, capsule and food form, these and other plant remedies may be poised to start a sexual revolution here, and Chris Kilham is taking up the charge.

Kilham, 52, is the explorer-in-residence at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, where he teaches ethnobotany.

He also is the author of the new book "Hot Plants" (St. Martin's Griffin, \$12.95), which chronicles his global pursuit of sex boosters for men and women.

The intrepid explorer, who says he stumbled onto libido boosters by investigating medicinal plants used in foreign countries, also helped develop supplement formulas — "Hot Plants for Her," Hot Plants for Him — based on his research.

"When I first heard of sexual enhancements from plants, I sort of assumed it wasn't real," he says. "But as I encountered more and more, I realized it was my attitude that wasn't real. You don't have something that people do for 2,000 or 3,000 years, millions of people, and there wasn't justification for it."

At contraire, says the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, which holds that a long tradition of use doesn't equal scientific proof.

Debate aside, Kilham is savvy enough to hear the cry for help coming from the bedrooms of America and thinks the "hot plants" can help.

According to the National Health and Social Life Survey, about 48 percent of women and 31 percent of men experience sexual dysfunction — numbers that are likely to grow as baby boomers see their hormones wane and energy flag in midlife.

That trend is coinciding with another: Americans' growing acceptance and use of dietary supplements and herbal remedies.

Patrick Rea, research director at the Nutrition Business Journal based in San Diego, says sex boosters are the fastest-growing category of the supplement business — up 21 percent in 2003, and still rolling thanks in part to the prolific marketing of sexual-performance drugs such as Viagra, Cialis and Levitra.

Kilham focuses on 10 hot plants he says can restore desire, function and response, though other herbalists have their own favorites.

Herb-al-pal remedies can have side effects, too.

And Kilham admits any readers of his book who have medical conditions to consult a doctor before trying hot plants.

Something's cooking at the White House

Walter Scheib III, the White House head chef, announced this month that he is leaving after 11 years in the president's kitchen. A look at some other White House culinarians who have prepared meals for the president and his guests:

In 1961, the Kennedys hired French chef **Rene Verdon**.

Jon Hill was recruited in 1967 by first lady Nancy Reagan (He served for only four months).

Assistant chef **Hans Raffert** became head chef in February 1968.

French chef **Pierre Chambrin** was hired by first lady Barbara Bush in October 1992.

White House chefs

Swiss-trained **Henry Haller** was hired by first lady Lady Bird Johnson in 1966. Haller served five presidents over 32 years: Johnson, Nixon, Ford, Carter and Reagan.

California native **Walter Scheib**, left, was hired by first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton in April 1994 to emphasize American tastes at the White House after years of French and European cooking.

SOURCES: White House Historical Association; White House Curator's Office

Mom of Ray Charles' son to get \$3,000 a month

The Associated Press

PASADENA, Calif. — A judge ruled that the mother of Ray Charles' teenage son will continue to receive \$3,000 a month in child support, not the \$15,000 she wanted, an attorney said.

Judge Coleman A. Swart ruled, however, that 17-year-old Corey Robinson den Bok also should re-

ceive money for his education and medical expenses, said Manley Freid, attorney for the executor of Charles' estate.

Mary Anne den Bok had initially sought at least \$60,000 a month in support for the teenager, but later amended that request.

The famed singer and musician was 73 when he died of acute

liver disease at his Beverly Hills home in June.

The teenager said outside court Wednesday that he wanted to return to the lifestyle he enjoyed when Charles was alive — including living in a much larger house with room to invite friends to stay over.

"I would go to his concerts, I'd

go backstage, he came to sing me happy birthday on my birthdays, he'd come for parents day at school," he said.

Attorneys for the executor of Charles' will have questioned whether Corey is Charles' child. But a judge ruled last month that the teen is the late singer's son because he is listed that way in the will.



Melo makes most of All-Star minutes

Anthony leads NBA sophomores past rookies to earn MVP award

BY EDDIE PELLIS

The Associated Press

DENVER — The unofficial ambassador of this year's All-Star Game got his chance to show that he, too, can play this game.

Carmelo Anthony took advantage of that opportunity, scoring 31 points Friday night to lead the sophomores to a 133-106 victory over the rookies in a matchup between the top stars from the two classes.

"It's another positive thing I can put on my résumé," Anthony said.

It was his only on-court appearance of this All-Star week — a period he has spent hosting parties, fund-raisers and generally showing his friends a good time around his adopted hometown.

Given his one chance to play, Anthony teamed with LeBron James as the first team in the Olympics, and fell just three points short of his season high with the Nuggets. He was the game's Most Valuable Player.

"I know he can play the game of basketball," James said. "Things haven't gone his way so far this year, but he's trying to get his mind straight. I'm so happy for him that he got the MVP tonight. It was supposed to happen this way."

Recuperating from an injured ankle and a bout with the flu, James had 20 points. Dwyane

Wade finished with 12 points and nine assists.

Even though this game will go down as a footnote during a week-end full of them, Anthony said he was glad to have played well.

"I go out there and I play basketball," he said. "I can't put my head down because I didn't make the game. Like I tell everybody, this is only my second year in the NBA. I'm going to be here for a long time. I'm not going anywhere."

Anthony's accomplishment came in a game that was surprisingly competitive.

Led by a handful of dunks by Tony Allen of the Celtics, the over-matched rookies — who came in mainly seeking to avoid embarrassment — held their lead into the second half.

Not until James made a 16-foot shot with 16:47 left did the sophomores take the lead for good.

"The sophomores spoke about it in the locker room at halftime," rookie Luol Deng said. "They came out and played with some intensity and we could see that."

As the half drew on, the sophomores' lead widened and play loosened up, although it never reached the silliness of last year's game, a 142-118 win for the sophomores that devolved into little more than a dunking contest.

Commissioner David Stern promised that scene wouldn't be



Sophomore Carmelo Anthony, left, drives by rookie Andre Igouda, right, during the first half of the NBA Rookie Challenge in Denver.

repeated this year, and made it clear he wanted players' best efforts in this exhibition.

"He didn't want the game like it was last year," Anthony said. "It got a little out of hand, which we all agreed on."

With their coach, P.J. Carlesimo, pacing the sideline, Allen, Deng and Al Jefferson led the rookies with 17 points each.

Chris Bosh had 26 points and 14 boards for the sophomores and Kyle Korver had 21.

But Anthony was the star and the fan favorite. His fiancée, MTV VJ La La Vasquez, watched from her customary seat at courtside, and every move he made was greeted by oohs and ahhs from the fans.

The game, as usual, was filled

with great dunks, none better than one early in the game when Wade feathered an underhanded pass in the lane up high for James, who slammed it down hard.

James finished with four slams — including a thundering wind-mill dunk — but that's all the fans will see — until Sunday. He declined an invitation to participate in Saturday's dunk contest. Earlier in the day, he said it was because he didn't feel well enough. After the game, he told a different story.

"Why don't guys do it anymore? Because all the dunks are taken," James said. "There are no more dunks. If we come up with some new dunks, people might do it. Every time there's a dunk out there, people say they've seen it before."

NBA scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division			
	W	L	Pct
Boston	27	26	.509
Philadelphia	27	27	.500
New Jersey	23	30	.434
New York	26	27	.491
Toronto	21	32	.396

Southeast Division			
	W	L	Pct
Miami	19	24	.441
Washington	20	22	.476
Orlando	19	24	.438
Charlotte	11	39	.220
Atlanta	10	41	.196

Central Division			
	W	L	Pct
Detroit	12	19	.387
Cleveland	20	21	.488
Chicago	26	23	.529
Indiana	25	26	.490
Milwaukee	20	30	.400

Western Conference

Southwest Division			
	W	L	Pct
San Antonio	41	12	.774
Dallas	32	16	.667
Houston	32	21	.604
Memphis	23	26	.469
New Orleans	11	42	.208

Northwest Division			
	W	L	Pct
Seattle	35	15	.700
Minnesota	27	23	.539
Denver	24	29	.453
Portland	21	32	.400
Utah	17	35	.329

Pacific Division			
	W	L	Pct
Phoenix	41	13	.759
Sacramento	33	20	.623
L.A. Lakers	29	24	.548
L.A. Clippers	23	30	.438
Golden State	15	38	.283

Friday's games

No games scheduled

Saturday's games

No games scheduled

Sunday's game

All-Star Game at Denver

Monday's games

No games scheduled

Tuesday's games

Indiana at Detroit

Milwaukee at Charlotte

New York at Detroit

Toronto at New Jersey

Miami at Chicago

Seattle at Houston

Atlanta at Sacramento

Boston at L.A. Lakers

Game: Theme missing this time around

GAME, FROM BACK PAGE

The big event is the All-Star Game itself, and it's wide open in terms of being there for the taking for anyone who wants to stamp it with his own signature. Shaquille O'Neal did so last year in Los Angeles with just the right mix of playfulness — grooming himself in the lens of a camera during a stoppage in play, running a fast break all by himself, dribbling upcourt and heading for the lane while daring anyone to step in his way and risk the wrath of a collision with his 360-pound frame.

"Guys get to do stuff they're not supposed to do, and it's a show," Shaquille O'Neal said. "Last year I won the MVP on silliness alone."

But will it be interesting? And will a theme emerge? Larry Brown figures those factors will take care of themselves — just as they did 19 years ago when the ABA had its final All-Star game in this city, an event in which Brown's Denver Nuggets played against a team of ABA All-Stars. Included among them was Julius Erving, who gave that game — and some would say that entire decade — its signature professional basketball moment by defeating hometown hero David Thompson in a slam dunk contest held at halftime.

"That was a pretty amazing moment," Brown said. "It was one of the most enjoyable experiences I've ever had."

NBA trying to learn from NHL lockout

BY CHRIS SHERIDAN

The Associated Press

DENVER — Only a couple hours before the news broke that NHL labor talks would resume, NBA commissioner David Stern said Friday he'd learned a lesson from hockey's collective bargaining negotiations.

"If you think a move at the last second can do the deal, you may be raising the stakes too much and eliminating the flexibility that might come from making your move earlier," Stern said.

Perhaps "Easy Dave" is about to make a reappearance.

Stern gave himself that nickname more than a decade ago when relations with the players' union had yet to sink to the low point they did in 1998 and 1999, when the NBA went through a costly seven-month lockout.

The seven-year agreement reached back then will expire at the end of June, and a conciliatory tone was set as players and owners held a 90-minute meeting at All-Star weekend. The sides still have major differences, but they're pledging to clear their calendars next month to try to resolve them.

"It was a very calm meeting today," said union president Michael Curry of the Indiana Pacers. "The best thing that was said was: 'Let's get a deal sooner rather than later.'"

Stern and union director Billy Hunter pledged to hold several smaller negotiating sessions in March, and Curry even said he's optimistic a deal will be reached by the end of the regular season.

Neither Stern nor Hunter were that positive, but Stern said the recent cancellation of the NHL season had made him stop and reflect. A veteran negotiator with a reputation as a tenacious litigator, Stern said each side in the hockey impasse softened its stance too late.

Last Monday, the hockey players dropped their unequipped opposition to a salary cap, and the NHL owners moved off their insistence on having a link between league revenues and player costs.

But less than 48 hours later, NHL commissioner Gary Bettman canceled the season. It may still be salvaged, however, if talks scheduled for Saturday in New York produce an agreement.

"Indirectly it may affect what we do," Curry said. "But we haven't been negotiating based on what hockey is doing, just as we won't do with football or baseball."

Among the items sought by NBA owners are a reduction in the maximum length of lockout contracts, a minimum age of 20 and a reduction in the annual pay increases allowed in long-term deals.

The union is seeking reductions in the so-called escrow and luxury taxes designed to place a drag on the growth of player salaries.

Whether Stern, Hunter and their attorneys can bridge those gaps will remain the billion-dollar question.

"We know where the deal can be made. The question is are we both willing to give up something to get there, or do we end up in some lockout," Hunter said.

The sides have historically had difficulty reaching a middle ground in their negotiations. Not since 1988 has a new agreement been reached before the old one expired.

"We have a chance to get something done," Curry said. "We're not in the same situation that we were in back in '98 when we had no structure to lean on. We do have a structure, but we have some tweaking to do to get a deal that's satisfying for both parties."

Curry was joined by players Terrell Davis of Portland, Eric Snow of Cleveland, Pat Garrity of Orlando, Ervin Johnson of Minnesota, Damon Jones of Miami, P.J. Brown of New Orleans and Malik Rose of San Antonio.

The owners were represented by Jerry Colangelo of Phoenix, Steve Mills of New York, Wyc Grousbeck of Boston, Micky Arison of Miami, Larry Tanenbaum of Toronto and Stan Kroenke of Denver.

Bruschi's return to NFL is uncertain

BY JOHN ALTAVILLA
The Hartford Courant

Considered the heart and soul of the New England Patriots' defense, Tedy Bruschi, married and the father of three young sons, undoubtedly faces the greatest challenge of his life now that he's been discharged from Massachusetts General Hospital.

"This is a major life event," said Dr. Isaac Silverman, Medical Director of the Stroke Center at Hartford Hospital. "At the very least, it's prone to make you wonder about one's health, especially for someone so young."

Two days after having a mild stroke, Bruschi was released from the hospital Friday afternoon, barely two days after he was admitted, which is not unusual in many cases.

"At the very least, that's a positive sign that the injury was comparatively mild," Dr. Silverman said.

The uncertainty that surrounded the onset of his stroke will likely characterize his prognosis for a total recovery — and return to the NFL — in the months to come.

Various medical experts conclude it's too early to tell if Bruschi will be able to play, although they say reports detailing his responsiveness while hospitalized indicate the chances are better.

"There's no reason to believe that he wouldn't be able to play again," said Dr. Hilary Onyiah, chief of neurosurgery at the Uni-



New England linebacker Tedy Bruschi, left, and his wife, Heidi, leave a hospital on Friday. Bruschi had a mild stroke and his ability to play football next season will be determined in a few months.

versity of Connecticut Medical Center.

Dr. Onyiah cautioned that if Bruschi is eventually placed on blood thinners to aid the healing of an arterial dissection, one of the possible causes of the stroke, it would be unlikely he could play because of the danger of uncontrolled bleeding in case of injury.

According to an NFL medical source who spoke on condition of anonymity, Bruschi faces a long road of tests, perhaps two to three months, before doctors can determine the damage that has been done.

"But once he's cleared to play, if he's ever cleared to play, he'll be the first one to know what's going on with his body," the source said. "He'll know what the damage is and what the impact has been."

If Bruschi wants to play, according to the source, he'll also likely be asked to legally exonerate any treating physician from a possible malpractice suit before he's allowed back on the field.

NHL season might be saved

Framework of deal reportedly reached; talks set for Saturday

BY CHRIS FOSTER
AND HELENE ELLIOTT
Los Angeles Times

In a startling turn of events instigated by two recent inductions to the Hockey Hall of Fame, officials of the NHL and its players' union will meet Saturday in an effort to salvage an abbreviated 2004-2005 season — three days after Commissioner Gary Bettman declared it dead.

The sudden revival of negotiations comes amid an outpouring of concern by players and owners, who felt stung by the cancellation after coming closer earlier this week to bridging their financial differences. The effort was jump-started by Wayne Gretzky, co-owner of the Phoenix Coyotes, and Pittsburgh Penguins player-owner Mario Lemieux, according to sources familiar with the situation.

Late Friday, The Hockey News reported that a deal was done in principle, though the NHL Players' Association denied the report. A source familiar with the negotiations said there was "a lot of work to be done."

The NHLPA announced Saturday's meeting in a statement. NHL executives did not respond to e-mails. Whether the season can be saved hinges on how Bettman reacts to the details in a proposal the union was developing late Friday night, the source said.

Bettman, NHL chief counsel Bill Daly, Gretzky and Lemieux were expected to meet Saturday morning with NHLPA President Trevor Linden; Ted Saskin, the union's senior director; Mike Gar-

ner, the union's director of business relations; and the union's entire executive committee.

Linden and Gartner met secretly with Bettman on Thursday, a union source said, and they discussed ways to reach a deal.

That led to a proposal for a salary cap of \$45 million to \$46 million, plus a luxury tax of 40 cents on every dollar of salary above \$40 million, to encourage teams to curb spending. The salary cap represents a compromise between the \$49 million offered by the players earlier in the week and the \$42.5 million sought by owners. The cap would drop to \$42 million if more than eight teams' payrolls reach \$46 million in one season.

The terms can be " tweaked " but not significantly altered, the source said, adding: " They have a framework that they are prepared to go with."

Bob Goodenow, the union's executive director, was not expected to take part in the talks. Well-placed sources said Goodenow told the union's executive committee that he could not recommend such a deal, or any deal like it, and that if the committee wanted to make that deal, it would have to do so on its own.

The players' executive committee — Daniel Alfredsson, Bob Boughner, Vincent Damphousse, Bill Guerin, Arturs Irbe, Trent Klatt — decided to do just that.

" Something " needed to be done," said Steve Ruchin, the Anaheim Mighty Ducks' union representative, who was not involved in the committee's decision. " I guess there wasn't total

closure even after the season was canceled. Things were happening. I'm not surprised at it."

Even if a tentative agreement is reached this weekend, time is growing short for staging even a fractional season, with a host of logistical and contractual matters needing resolution — among them the 300 players who must return from European teams and the 180 free agents who remain unsigned.

Sources said training camps could be open by Feb. 28, with a 28-game season to begin about a week later.

" Realistically, the next 48 hours can have the impact to determine the next six years in the National Hockey League," said Pat Brisson, a prominent agent. " This is huge."

Gretzky and Lemieux, two of the game's greats, were said to have talked at length Thursday about how to save the season.

Lemieux is also believed to have talked with players Thursday, while Gretzky said he discussed the labor stalemate with Shane Doan, Phoenix's union representative. Doan was involved with the believed half-dozen players who were trying to create a proposal suitable to Bettman.

What followed was a series of talks between a group of top-flight players, high-powered agents, concerned owners and influential general managers, who all tried to find a way to salvage the season.

There were also several calls to the union from unhappy players, who wondered why the offer to give in on the salary cap — union executives had long opposed a cap — wasn't made sooner.

Prospective Vikings owner apologizes for résumé gaffes

BY DAVE CAMPBELL
The Associated Press

BLOOMINGTON, Minn. — Reggie Fowler apologized Friday for mistakes he made in misleading the public about his background and reiterated he has the money to buy the Minnesota Vikings.

The Arizona businessman, poised to become the NFL's first black owner, has an agreement to purchase the club from Red McCombs — pending league approval.

Fowler met with the Twin Cities media to accept responsibility for inaccuracies in a biography distributed earlier this week

by a public relations firm he's using, attempting to repair his image and pledge his sincerity and passion to fans.

His original bio claimed he played in the NFL with the Cincinnati Bengals in the Canadian Football League with the Calgary Stampeders and in the Little League World Series as an 11-year-old.

Fowler, a star linebacker at Wyoming, was cut in training camp by the Bengals and by the Edmonton Eskimos — not the Stampeders. Clarifying the Little League confusion, Fowler said he played with an all-star team in a tournament in California that was called the World Series.

Though he refused to detail any parts of the botched bio embellishments or perceptions, Fowler acknowledged that he intentionally doctored his resume years ago to show he graduated from Wyoming with a degree in business administration and an emphasis in finance.

Fowler, who took business classes but actually received a degree in social work, said he fudged his resume after graduating in the early 1980s to look better for prospective employers.

Regarding the CFL confusion, Fowler said he remembered Thursday — by looking at a W-2 form — that he reported to

Calgary initially before being sent to Edmonton, where he was cut after a brief stint.

The biography came from his office in Chandler, Ariz., where Fowler runs Spiral Inc., a diverse business that has numerous real estate holdings and owns companies in several industries, including broadcasting, aviation and manufacturing.

Estimating the last time he created a résumé was more than 20 years ago, Fowler said the errors — other than the degree discrepancy — came from oversights.

" When you don't pay attention to what you put out," Fowler said, " you're subject to errors. I'm a perfect example of that."

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Hard-driving Harvick not about to change

Popularity in Nextel Cup garage not important to Childress driver

BY PAUL NEWBERRY

The Associated Press

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. — Kevin Harvick is sorry for the wreck he caused during a qualifying race for Sunday's Daytona 500.

He's not about to change, though.

And if he's a pariah in the NASCAR garage, so be it.

"I just drive by the seat of my pants, and some guys don't like that," Harvick said. "It doesn't bother me. I'll go out and stand on the gas tomorrow."

In another era, he might be treated with grudging respect.

After all, Harvick's hard and doesn't really care what anyone thinks.

Instead, he's one of the most unpopular drivers in the Nextel Cup circuit, viewed by many of his rivals as an impetuous loner who doesn't care how many cars he wrecks along the way.

"It's hard to find guys who have the ability to get the job done and want to run fast every lap," Joe Nemechek said. "But you've got to have some common sense to go along with it."

"Kevin Harvick is Kevin Harvick."

Harvick's latest run-in came Thursday during the second

150-mile qualifying race. Coming through Turn 2, he nudged leader Jimmie Johnson from behind, sparking a crash that took out Johnson, Harvick, Mark Martin, Rusty Wallace and Nemechek. Harvick, Wallace and Nemechek sustained enough damage to force them into backup cars for the 500. Martin's crew spent Friday furiously trying to repair his mangled vehicle.

The crash victims were livid at Harvick, saying he had no business "bump drafting" Johnson as they came through one of the high-banked turns. Some wondered if the move had anything to do with a simmering feud between the drivers that goes back to last season.

Johnson called for Harvick to be fired by his team and fined by NASCAR. Nemechek derisively tossed a water bottle at Harvick after they were treated at the infield care center.

NASCAR officials summoned Harvick and Johnson to their hauler and told them to make up — or else. Another incident will likely result in heavy fines and maybe even a suspension.

That would be nothing new for Harvick. He received a one-race suspension in 2002 for rough driving — the first driver in Cup histo-



Kevin Harvick in 2002 became the first driver in Nextel Cup history to be forced to sit out a race for rough driving. In 2003, he was fined \$35,000 for intentionally running into another car at Richmond.

ry forced to sit out a race. The following year, NASCAR levied a \$35,000 fine for a meltdown at Richmond, where Harvick intentionally banged into Ricky Rudd's car after they tangled late in a race.

Harvick admitted he was at fault for Thursday's wreck, but insisted it was nothing intentional. NASCAR accepted his explanation, but also ordered Harvick and Johnson to work at their differences at a private, one-on-one summit.

With that out of way, both Harvick and Johnson said Friday that all is forgiven.

"A day makes a big difference," Johnson said. "We got together and talked everything out. Today is a new day. We'll start with a new sheet of paper."

Just don't expect a kinder, gentler Harvick when the green flag drops on Sunday. He has no intention of changing his aggressive driving style just because he's not well-liked in the paddock.

Maybe Harvick races so hard because of the seat he had to fill at Richard Childress Racing.

When Dale Earnhardt was killed in a last-lap crash at Daytona — Friday was the fourth anniversary of the Intimidator's death — Harvick had the unenviable task of replacing a seven-time

NASCAR Cup champion.

Harvick won in just his third career start, the first of two victories in 2001. He won again each of the next two years, but slumped to 14th in the points during a winless '04 season.

"He was put in that car," Nemechek said. "It would be tough for anybody who was put in that situation."

While the 29-year-old Harvick is linked with other "Young Guns" such as Johnson, Dale Earnhardt Jr. and Ryan Newman, he's never had a close relationship with other drivers from his generation. He spends much of his time with his wife, DeLana, whom he married in Las Vegas just two days after making his Cup debut in 2001.

"Kevin kind of keeps to himself," said Kyle Petty, who's never had any problems with Harvick. "When you look around at most of the younger guys ... they all hang out together. But Kevin stuck with DeLana."

Harvick has never minced his words, either, another trait that rubs some of his rivals the wrong way.

"He pretty much speaks his mind," Petty said. "There's nothing wrong with that. You can say what you feel as long as you back it up."

Martin wins record 12th IROC race

The Associated Press

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. — Mark Martin became the winning driver in IROC history, moving past the late Dale Earnhardt and Al Unser Jr. by taking the season-opening race Friday night at Daytona International Speedway.

Martin earned his 12th International Race of Champions victory by passing fellow NASCAR Nextel Cup star Matt Kenseth on a restart with four laps remaining. Then Martin held off Martin Truex Jr. over the final laps and beat him to the finish line by a half-car length.

"The king of IROC won the race, and I'll finish second to him anytime," said Truex, the NASCAR Busch Series champion making his IROC debut.

Bobby Hamilton, NASCAR's truck series champion, was third. Kenseth ended up fourth after leading 31 of the first 36 laps in the 40-lap event.

Kenseth was in front when the race was halted for about 10 minutes after a multi-car accident that included IndyCar star Helio Castroneves, 19-time World of Outlaws champion Steve Kinser, Grand American Road Racing driver Scott Pruett and Champ Car's Sebastian Bourdais.

Martin started the melee when he ran into the back of Kenseth, causing the 2001 Cup champion to slow up and sparking a series of crashes.

Kinser ran into Pruett, who then spun into the wall and took Bourdais into the grass, second to Kenseth for much of the race, also was caught up in the mess.

Kenseth, the defending IROC champion, looked primed to win his third consecutive race. But World of Outlaws driver Danny Lasoski bumped him on the restart, forced him to wiggle and allowed Martin to drive by on the outside.

Martin held on from there to get the record.

Hamilton wins wild truck race at Daytona

BY MARK LONG

The Associated Press

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. — Bobby Hamilton was standing on pit road and Jimmy Spencer was celebrating in Victory Lane.

Then they switched positions.

Hamilton was awarded a victory in the wreck-filled Florida Dodge Dealers 250 on Friday night at Daytona International Speedway after Spencer initially took the checkered flag and drove into the winner's circle.

It was the perfect ending for a frenzied race that included several lead changes, several major crashes and two flipping trucks.

"That was pretty wild," Hamilton said.

Hamilton took the lead after a restart with one lap to go, but Spencer was back in front when

an eight-truck wreck started behind the leaders. However, before the caution flag came out, Hamilton moved back in front.

NASCAR officials quickly changed the result, but not after Spencer had made his way to Victory Lane. Spencer smiled and shook his head after he told the news. He put his steering wheel back on, and crew members begrudgingly pushed his car back to the pits.

Hamilton, meanwhile, just clapped his hands when told of the scoring change. Within minutes, his team was in Victory Lane, reveling in the win in the season-opening race for NASCAR's truck series.

"It was almost a no-brainer," Hamilton said. "I pretty much knew it. I had confidence in what was going to happen."

The defending series champion picked up his ninth career truck victory and became the series' first driver to win from the last starting spot.

But his comeback was overshadowed by several major accidents, including two in the final laps.

Spencer took the lead with seven laps remaining. He moved to the front just as Dennis Setzer bumped Chad Chaffin and sent him sliding into the infield. Chaffin flipped once and landed upright.

Setzer, Terry Cook and Johnny Benson also were involved, but none of them was injured.

Hamilton overtaken Spencer after the restart, and as it turned out, he held on for the victory.

The frantic finish capped a chaotic night.

Pole-sitter Kerry Earnhardt and several other top contenders were knocked out midway through the 100-lap race.

Earnhardt lost control of his Chevrolet coming out of Turn 4 on Lap 49, spun into the wall and started an eight-truck pileup. No one was hurt.

Just a few laps later, another accident involved five trucks, including race leader Mike Skinner.

Brendan Gaughan, who was demoted from the Nextel Cup series after finishing 28th in points last year, was fighting to get a lap back. He pulled alongside Skinner but lost control of his truck. He clipped Skinner and sent him into the wall.

"I don't know what happened," Skinner said. "Either he ran out of talent or brains or luck. I'm not sure."

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Crashing the party

ACC newcomer Virginia Tech shows itself to be more than just a football school with rousing upset of Duke

By HANK KURZ JR.
The Associated Press

BLACKSBURG, Va. — Seth Greenberg took over a bad team in the Big East when he was hired to be Virginia Tech's basketball coach before last season.

After Thursday night's shocking defeat of No. 7 Duke, Greenberg is leading an upstart team in the Atlantic Coast Conference.

"This is just one of those special nights," Greenberg said following the 67-65 victory. "It's something that, as we're trying to build a program, you can hang your hat on."

It's also a signal to other ACC schools that the Hokies are not just mere patsies on the basketball court, afterthoughts brought over when the university was recruited along with Miami to bolster ACC football. Incidentally, Virginia Tech also made a successful debut on the gridiron, winning the conference title and securing the ACC's BCS berth.

The Hokies (13-10, 6-6 ACC) ended a three-game losing streak and pulled into a three-way tie for fourth in the league with Maryland and Miami. They also averaged a 100-65 loss to the Blue Devils less than three weeks ago.

The Hokies went 15-14 last season but many thought that the move to the ACC and the subsequent stacking of their schedule with traditional powers such as Duke, North Carolina and Maryland — would doom them to several years of sub-.500 records.

So far, however, Virginia Tech has shown it can compete.

"Now we belong. Hokies guard Zabian Dowdell said after the Duke game. "I mean, now we have to take us serious, now. Whether they like it or not, we're here."

"This is just one of those special nights. It's something that, as we're trying to build a program, you can hang your hat on."

Seth Greenberg
Virginia Tech coach

Duke is all too aware.

The Blue Devils seemed poised to run away with the game before Coleman Collins energized the crowd with a dunk midway through the second half. The Hokies also put together a 9-0 run to take a 58-54 lead with 7:00 left.

Then, after J.J. Redick hit a three-pointer with 22.9 seconds left to give the Blue Devils a 65-64 lead, Dowdell made a three-pointer from the right wing with 14.6 seconds remaining that caused the sellout crowd to erupt.

Moments later, hundreds of fans poured onto the court to celebrate one of the biggest victories in school history.

"They just willed us to win down the stretch," Greenberg said of the crowd. "They were magnificent. They just embraced and took ownership and motivated and helped us go to another level. That's what college basketball is all about, having a chance to do what we did tonight."

The Hokies had plenty to do

with it. They outrebounded the Blue Devils 49-32, led by Collins with 18.

"They outgassed us. They showed a great deal of poise," Duke coach Mike Krzyzewski said. "For us to get outrebounded by 17 in a basketball game shows something about us, but more about the other team."

The key, Jamon Gordon said, was believing, and forgetting the earlier loss at Duke when some questioned the wide disparity in free throws. The Blue Devils went to the line 49 times that day, the Hokies just 23.

"I told the team (Wednesday) that we can't play with the refs. If they call it, they call it," Gordon said. "Just keep playing hard and if we can keep it close in the last few minutes, we have a chance to win it."

When they did, there were accolades all around:

■ Collins outplayed Duke's Shelden Williams, adding 14 points and five blocks to his rebounding.

■ Gordon, a 6-foot-3 sophomore, had 17 points, six rebounds and four of the Hokies' 12 blocks.

■ Carlos Dixon, the lone senior, matched Redick, point for point and got him into foul trouble.

■ Dowdell answered Redick's go-ahead three-pointer, then lost his shirt when he tossed it into the crowd during the victory celebration.

■ Jeff King, the starting tight end in football, who rebounded his own missed free throw and got the ball to Dixon for a three-pointer and a 56-54 Virginia Tech lead.

"That was like The possession of the game and so emblematic of their effort," Krzyzewski said, "which was such a winning effort."



Virginia Tech's Zabian Dowdell launches what proved to be the winning three-pointer over Duke's Daniel Ewing (5) in the final seconds Thursday night. ACC newcomer Virginia Tech showed it is a team to be reckoned with after a 67-65 upset of the league's perennial powerhouse.

Curry takes advantage of second chance

By JEFF LATZKE
The Associated Press

STILLWATER, Okla. — One big reason was all in the head, and JamesOn Curry went from being the star of stars in high school to finding himself without a college team.

Scoring more than 40 points a game, Curry was popular, successful and headed to North Carolina to play for the Tar Heels.

Then he was caught in a drug sting at his high school, and it was all taken away.

He was kicked off the basketball team, his scholarship offer was rescinded and other schools shied away, too.

Oklahoma State came along to give him a second chance — and he's taking advantage of it. The freshman guard from Mebane, N.C., earned a spot in the starting lineup five games ago, and he has the Cowboys playing much like the team that made it to the Final Four a year ago.

Since the move, he's gone from averaging 5.8 points to scoring

"I had to grow up fast because of my past and what happened. Coming here and being so far away, I had to grow up."

JamesOn Curry
Oklahoma State guard

14.2, he's shooting 65 percent from three-point range and the Cowboys have won five games in a row.

"I'm the type of player that I want to be in there," 19-year-old Curry said. "I want to be the game. I want that shot, I want that good pass or I want that steal. I want to make that big play."

"I just have that attitude."

Curry set North Carolina prep scoring records for a freshman, sophomore and junior before breaking the career mark his senior year. He averaged 40.2 points and scored at least 25 in every game of his senior season before being dismissed following the Final Four.

At age 18, he was caught selling marijuana to an undercover police officer who had been posing

as a student at Eastern Alamance High School. Dozens of students were charged in the drug sting.

Curry pleaded guilty to six felony drug counts on April 5, received three years of probation and was ordered to pay several fines and perform 200 hours of community service. Two days later, North Carolina coach Roy Williams rescinded his scholarship offer.

At first, no one showed any interest in the troubled teen. Then, Oklahoma State assistant James Dickey got a phone call from a friend asking about Curry.

"When the question was posed to me, 'Would you guys be interested in JamesOn Curry?' I tried to temper my enthusiasm," Dickey said.

Oklahoma State had heard

about Curry, but never expected he'd be available. The 6-foot-3 guard had told his high school coach he didn't want to play for a school more than a two-hour drive from home — or that forgot to capitalize the 'O' in his first name.

"That was like the better sounding it was," Dickey said. "I think the theme from everyone was: terrific young man, outstanding basketball player."

Dickey and assistant Sean Sutton went to visit with Curry and came back hoping he'd commit to Oklahoma State.

"After we made the trip to North Carolina, there was no doubt in our minds that we really wanted him," Dickey said. "We were really impressed."

Cowboys coaches talked to people who knew Curry and became

comfortable trusting him in the program.

"The bottom line was he made a mistake as a young man. All of us have made mistakes," Dickey said. "He'll grow from that. He's past it, and we're going to move on and focus on the positive things."

And there are plenty of positives since Curry arrived in Stillwater. He surpassed his goal of at least a 3.25 grade-point average, was able to join with a team that features seven seniors and has contributed more and more as the season progressed.

"I had to grow up fast because of my past and what happened," Curry said. "Coming here and being so far away, I had to grow up."

"I think there's no doubt Coach (Eddie) Sutton would always be there and my teammates are always there, but it's nothing like your mom and dad."

Making the starting lineup is not enough for Curry. He has big plans.

"I want to be best player ever to come here," he said.

Austrians sweep men's downhill; Miller places fourth

The Associated Press

GARMISCH-PARTENKIRCHEN, Germany — Michael Walchhofer won his second World Cup downhill race in two days, leading a 1-2-3 Austrian sweep ahead of Bode Miller on Saturday and closing in on the discipline title. Walchhofer easily won Friday's downhill and again tamed the Kandahar course, finishing in 1 minute, 56.50 seconds for his third consecutive World Cup downhill victory overall.

"It was bumpier and more difficult today," Walchhofer said. "But I did it and it is really satisfying after all the troubles I've had here in the past."

Walchhofer has finally shaken a long, troublesome trend of crashing on the final turn here. In previous races, he'd crashed four consecutive times on the tricky FIS-Schneise, then last season lost a healthy advantage after skidding onto his backside in the turn and finished 16th.

"It looks like I finally learned to ski that turn," Walchhofer said.

Teammate Mario Scheiber was second Saturday (1:56.59) for his first World Cup downhill top-three finish, and reigning Olympic champion Fritz Strobl was third (1:56.95).

World downhill champion Miller finished one spot off the podium with a time of 1:57.03 and U.S. teammate Daron Rahalves was fifth.

Sports briefs

"I made two mistakes, one that cost me almost a second," said Miller, who led after the first two intervals in Friday's downhill but lost time after going wide coming out of the bottom of the bosome FIS-Schneise turn and settled for third.

"The way I've been skiing these days, it's pretty disappointing to be making those kinds of mistakes. It's pretty frustrating," Miller increased his advantage over Austria's Benjamin Raich in the overall World Cup standings.

The American has 1,203 points, 167 ahead of Raich, who finished 17th in Saturday's race.

Dorfmeyer leads Austria's 1-2 finish in women's super-G

ARE, Sweden — Michaela Dorfmeier and Alexandra Meissnitzer gave Austria the top two spots in a wind-swept super-G race Saturday, while world champion and defending World Cup overall champ Anja Paerson finished fifth before her home fans.

Dorfmeier skied almost flawlessly down the 1,801-meter Olympia course, crossing in 1 minute, 07.53 seconds. It was her second super-G victory of the season.

Meissnitzer was 0.45 behind

and Lucia Recchia of Italy took third, 0.52 back.

"It was a good race, but not perfect," Dorfmeier said. "But when you ski fast you can make mistakes. I'm surprised the victory margin was so big, because the course is not long. It wasn't easy because the wind was difficult at the top."

Dorfmeier's 19th career World Cup victory moved her within two points of teammate Renate Goetschl in the super-G standings.

Lindsey Kildow of the United States, seventh in Saturday's race, is third in the standings with 326 points.

Janica Kostelic of Croatia, who won three titles in the world championships, was 0.54 off Dorfmeier's pace and finished fourth, enough to overtake Finland's Tanja Poutiainen for the overall World Cup lead. Kostelic has 928 points; Poutiainen has 909.

Raid rescues Urbina's mother from abductors in Venezuela

CARACAS, Venezuela — Venezuelan police stormed a mountain camp and rescued the mother of Detroit Tigers pitcher Ugueth Urbina from kidnappers who demanded \$6 million in ransom, ending an ordeal that lasted more than five months.

The raid Friday left at least one of the abductors dead, but 54-year-old Maura Villarreal was unharmed, police said.

Urbina was reunited with his mother late Friday at a police station in Caracas, where he hurriedly slipped past reporters to go inside, saying only: "I'm happy. Excuse me, but now I just want to see her."

Officers from a special anti-kidnapping unit rescued Villarreal hours earlier from a remote mountainous area in the southern state of Bolivar, said Joel Rengifo, the chief officer in the division.

"It was a clean and well-planned operation," said Rengifo, who added that Villarreal was unharmed.

The major league's mother, who had been missing since she was kidnapped from her home Sept. 1, told reporters the experience was "unexpected — I never thought they would kidnap me."

"You can't say they treated me either well or poorly. The most hurtful thing was having to hear them saying that my son didn't love me because he didn't pay," Villarreal said.

Prosecutors toughen charges against former Iowa star

IOWA CITY, Iowa — Prosecutors filed tougher charges Friday against former Iowa basketball player Pierre Pierce in connection with an alleged assault on his former girlfriend last month.

The new charges, which supersede six previous counts filed last week, include two counts of

first-degree burglary, one count of assault with intent to commit sexual assault and one count of fourth-degree criminal mischief.

Pierce says Pierce, 21, choked his former girlfriend in her townhouse, threatened her with a knife and stripped her after an argument over her new boyfriend. Pierce also is accused of causing damage to her apartment and stealing a laptop and camera.

The amended charges mean Pierce is charged with three felonies, instead of one, and could face up to 56 years in jail if convicted. Arraignment is set for March 4.

LeBron hails on dunk contest

DENVER — LeBron James is taking a pass on the NBA's All-Star game dunk contest.

James ended days of speculation Friday by deciding to sit out the competition because of a sore left ankle and lingering flu symptoms.

"I'm still a little sick and my ankle's still a little tender," James said. "I'm not getting as much lift as I know I can get off this ankle. I'll be there in attendance but I won't be participating in it."

James still plans to play on the sophomore team in the Rookie Challenge and as a starter for the East in the All-Star Game.

Competing in the dunk competition will be rookie Josh Smith of Atlanta, J.R. Smith and Chris Andersen of New Orleans and Amare Stoudemire of Phoenix.



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SPORTS

Not much of a challenge



LeBron James, right, hugs teammate Carmelo Anthony after Anthony scored during the final minutes of the NBA Rookie Challenge on Friday at the Pepsi Center in Denver. Anthony, who earned the game's MVP award, had 31 points in leading the sophomores to a 133-106 win. See story on Page 26.

Big Unit gives Boss good impression; Red Sox keep up verbal attacks on archrival

Page 29



Stirring up trouble nothing new for NASCAR driver Harvick

Page 28



Bruschi's future in NFL uncertain after having mild stroke, Page 27

All-Star Game lacking drama

NBA showcase features little luster to lure in fans this year

By CHRIS SHERIDAN
The Associated Press

DENVER — A mile above sea level, just a little to the left of America's midsection, the NBA All-Star Game has arrived lacking a clear-cut theme.

It will be LeBron James' first appearance and Shaquille O'Neal's 12th in the league's showcase event, and in between those two on the frequency meter are 22 other well-deserving players of various shapes and sizes — though there's nary a Nugget to represent the host team, and no compelling story line to reel in the casual fan.

"Whoa, I have no idea. Better ask someone else," Ben Wallace of the Detroit Pistons said when asked to come up with a motif for this year's game.

"I can't come up with something. I don't know," offered Tracy McGrady of the Rockets.

"Kobe against Shaq," opined Yao Ming, who might have forgotten that the feuding superstars already had their first official on-court clash back on Christmas Day.

"How about Yao vs. Shaq?" Yao was asked in return. After all, those two were teamed on the Western Conference squad the past two years before O'Neal was traded last summer to Miami. This time, O'Neal will be starting for the East and jumping center against Yao when the opening tip goes up.

"I won't be using all six of my fouls against him," Yao predicted.

This will be the league's 54th All-Star Game and the first time in 21 years it's being held in Denver. It comes during a somewhat troubled year, the defining moment of the current season coming on the third Friday of November when Ron Artest and Stephen

Jackson of the Pacers charged into the stands and pummeled Pistons fans as a wild brawl broke out in the final minute of an Indiana-Detroit game.

Two of the principal figures from that troubling night, Indiana's Jermaine O'Neal and Detroit's Wallace, will be teammates on an East squad that will try to break the conference's three-game All-Star losing streak.

Both Jermaine O'Neal and Wallace already have served suspensions stemming from the melee, but both can certainly count on the topic being brought up ad nauseam over the course of the three-day All-Star weekend.

"There are a lot of positive things going on in this league."

People want to take the negative things to write about," Jermaine O'Neal said last week. "We have good players in this league. We have players that take care of kids who need things in the community, that take care of families that need things, but you don't see that written."

The NBA is doing what it can to try to steer the focus away from the negative, and there's no shortage of feel-good events — including the Read-to-Achieve Caravan, a Jr.NBA/WNBA Basketball and Books clinic, several hospital visits and the hugely popular Jam Session — taking place throughout the week.

The city will be overrun with fans, sponsors, media, players and hangers-on, and the All-Star party scene typically goes strong into the wee hours. With the rookie game held on Friday night for the second straight year, and the three-point shootout and dunk contest taking place Saturday night, the event has morphed into a 72-hour conglomeration of activity.

SEE GAME ON PAGE 26

NHL, players' association resume negotiations three days after calling off season

Page 27